

RAY BRADBURY

CHRONICLES



⇒ VOLUME 7 ⇐

STEVE BASKERVILLE • DEL BARRAS • JOHN CARNELL
LARS HOKANSON • HOWARD SIMPSON
ANTHONY WILLIAMS • WALLY WOOD

THE **RAY**
BRADBURY

CHRONICLES

TRILOGY OF
TERROR

I

Skeleton

II

Uncle Einar

III

Home to Stay
An EC Classic



NANTIER • BEAL • MINOUSTCHINE
publishing inc.
new york

A BYRON PREISS VISUAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. BOOK

INTRODUCTION

I visited my doctor one day fifty years ago and had him shine his flash down my gullet at my sore throat. I also protested that my muscles around my esophagus seemed strange and he replied, "Everything's normal, you've just never felt those particular muscles before. There's a lot about your body you haven't investigated. Like the *medulla oblongata* on the back of your skull, or your kneecaps, or your floating ribs." I left his office, feeling my bones, and went home and in two hours wrote "Skeleton."

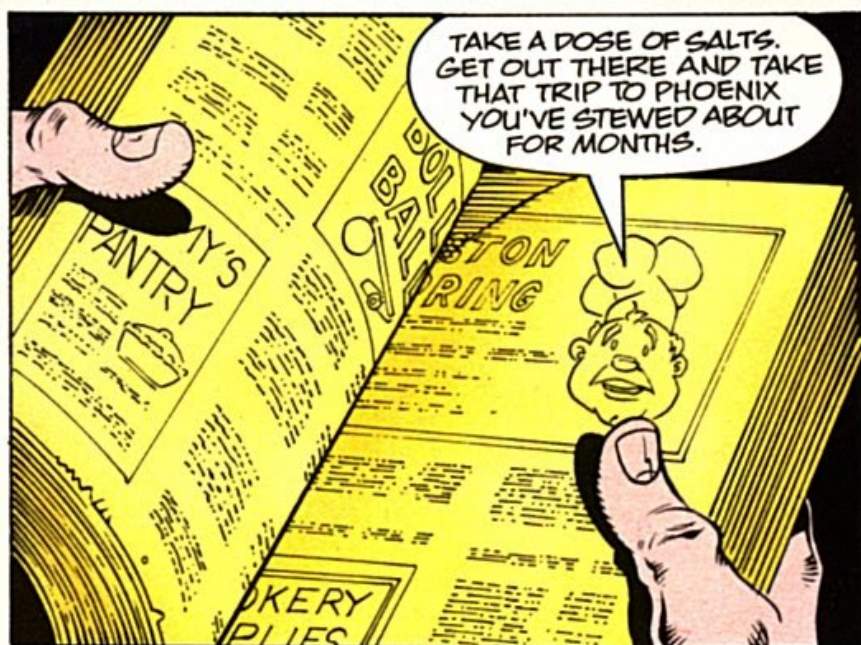
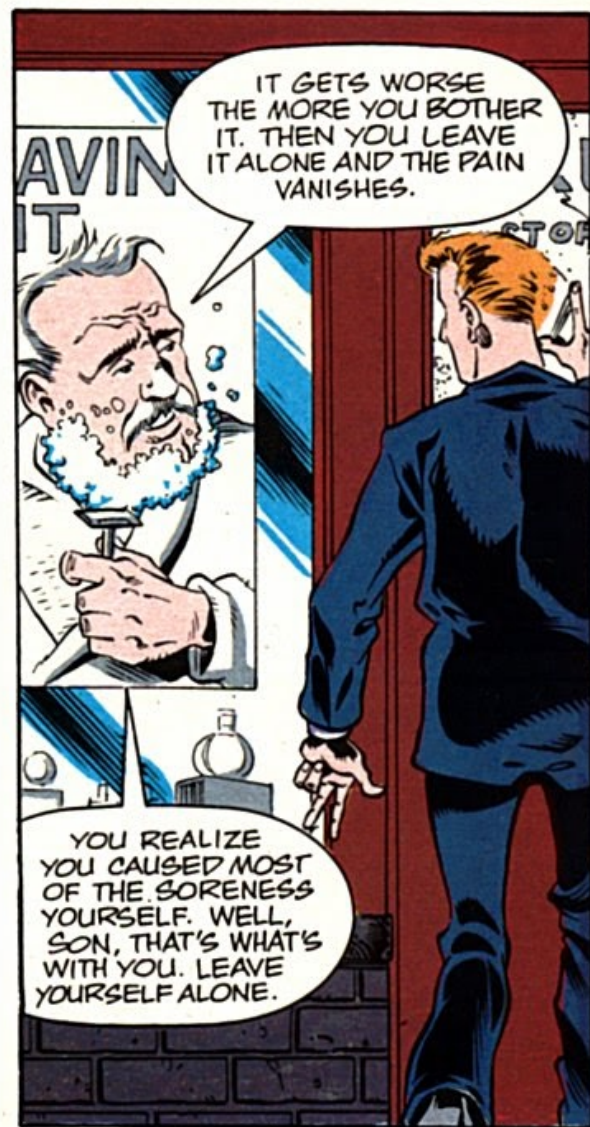
"Uncle Einar" is based on my very real wondrous loud Swedish uncle by that name. He yelled and shouted and laughed his way through my life from the year I was born until 1966 when suddenly he was gone. Along the way through those years I so much loved him that I had to put wings on him, let him fly, and try to make him immortal. He won't fly forever, no, but he will be around in our lives for a bit more time. All we have to do to prove this is look up at the sky. There he is *now*!

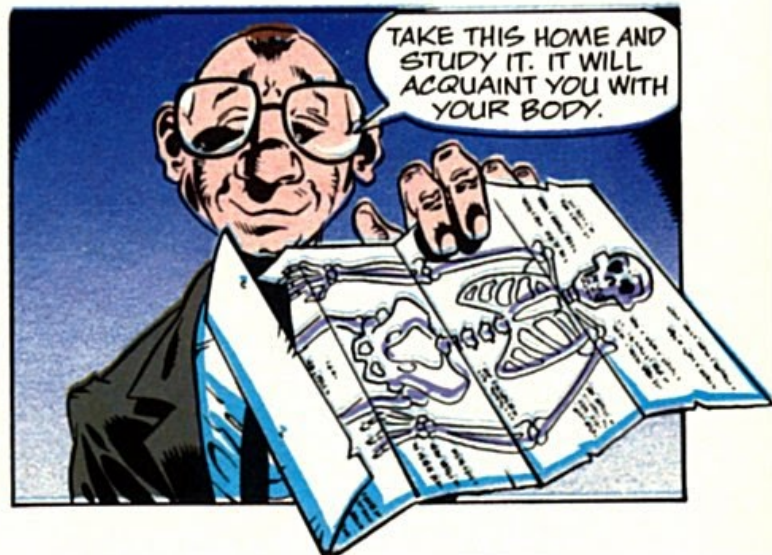
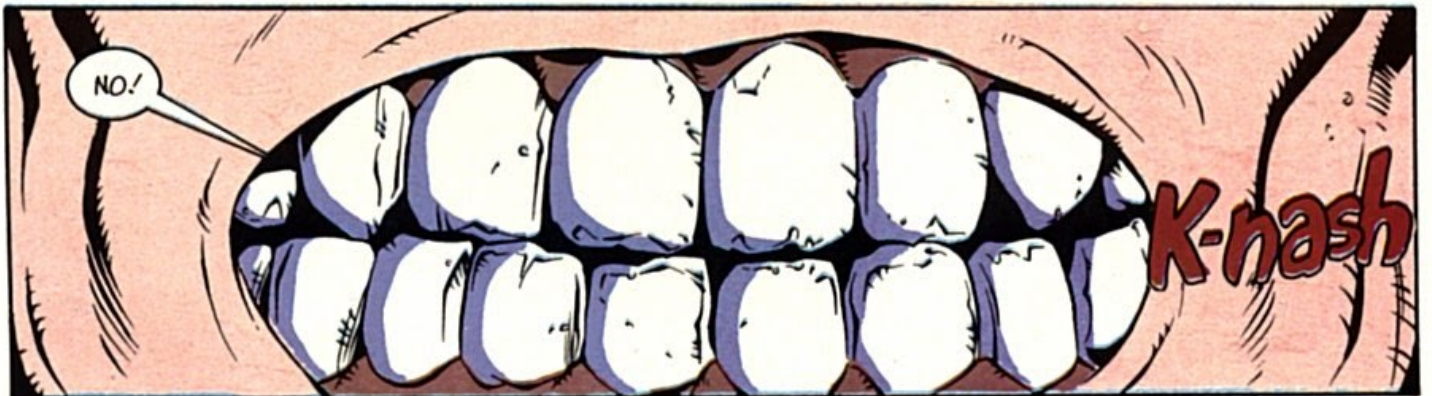
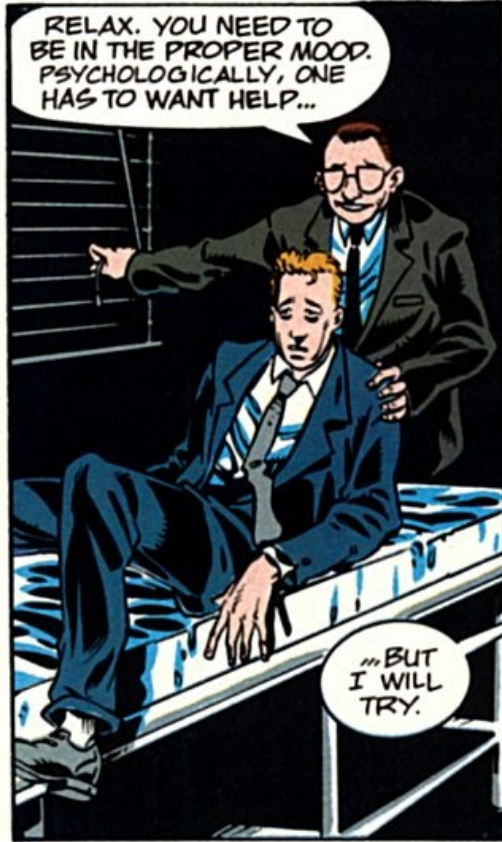
"Home to Stay" is and is not my story. It is, above all, the illustrated tale that brought me and William M. Gaines, the editor/publisher of *Mad* magazine and *Tales from the Crypt*, together.

How so? Back some forty years ago I began to get fan mail from around the country advising me to check out "Home to Stay." Someone actually sent me a copy. There was no name on the cartoon story, but it strongly resembled two of my tales, "The Rocket Man" and "Kaleidoscope." I was alternately nonplussed, irritated, and somewhat angry at what I considered to be the "borrowing" of my work. Deciding on a decent Christian approach to the problem, I wrote a letter of praise to Gaines and the adaptation of my stories. I ended the letter saying I realized how busy they were, but would they mind sending on my check for the publication rights. The check arrived the next week! I then hastily wrote Gaines saying that I feared for future rights on many of my stories, and would he and his fine artists adapt and illustrate 30 or 40 of my concepts and protect me from the "borrowers" out there in the publishing wilderness. Gaines agreed and the rest is history. During the next ten years, some 30-odd EC comics appeared using my dreams and fancies. Here's the one that started it all.

Ron Bradbury

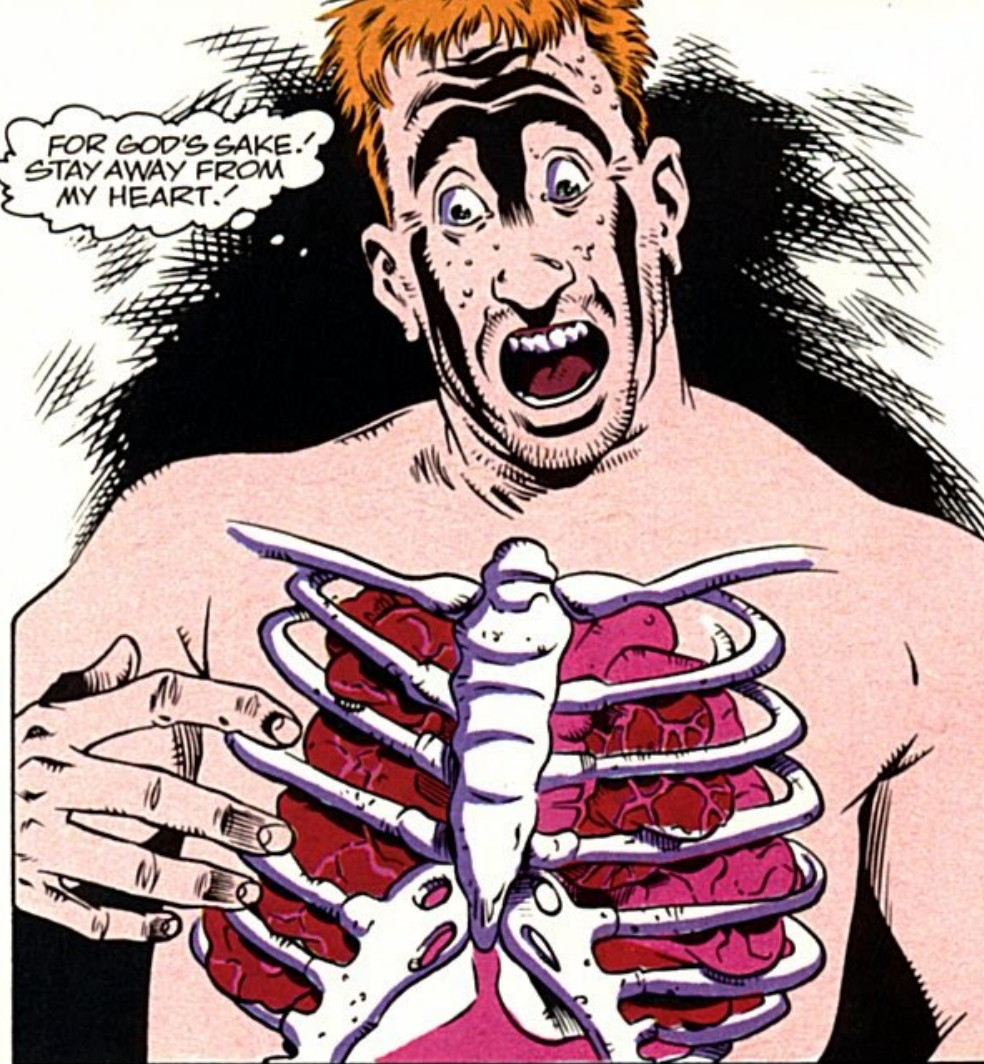
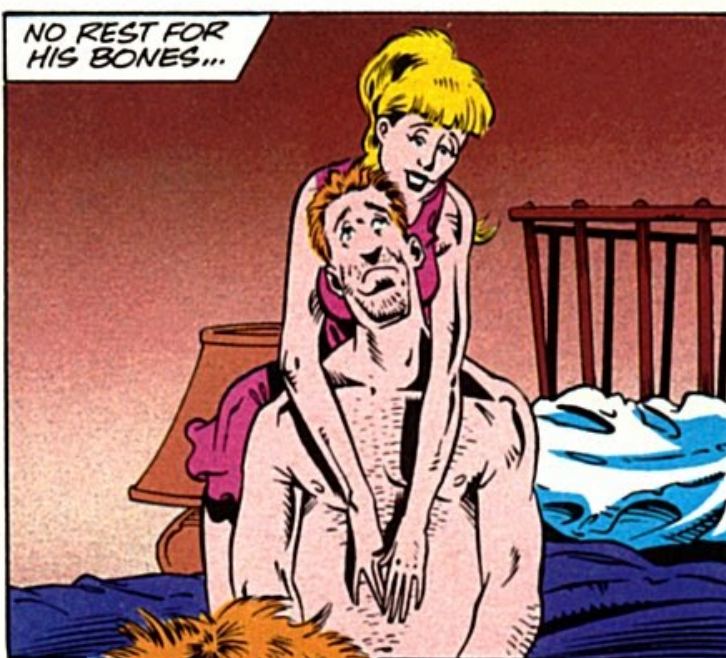














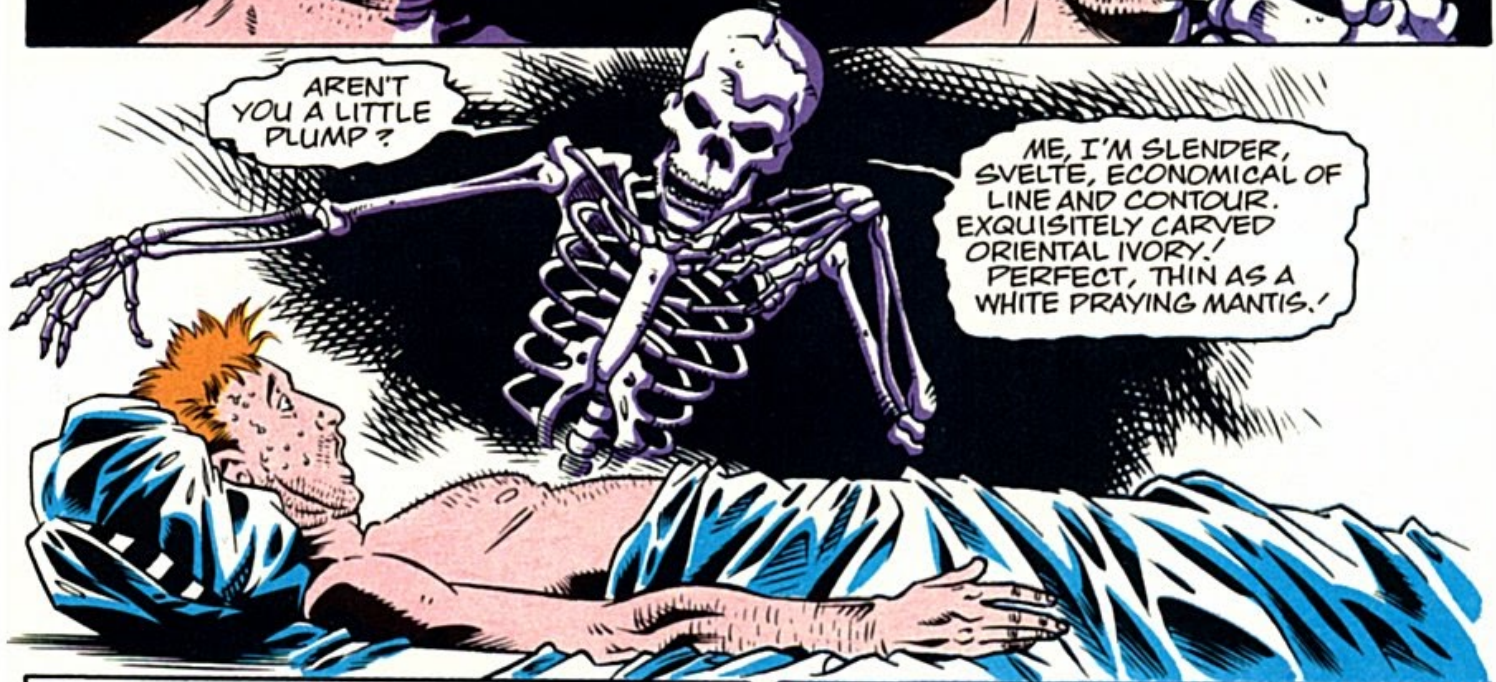
YOUR COMPLEXION: OILY AND LINED WITH WORRY.

MINE: SNOW WHITE. NOTE THE FLAWLESS PERFECTION OF THE SKULL.



YOUR NOSE: TOO LARGE.

SEE THE TINY BONES OF THE SKULL'S NOSE BEFORE YOUR MONSTROUS NASAL CARTILAGE BEGINS FORMING THE LOPSIDED PROBOSCIS...



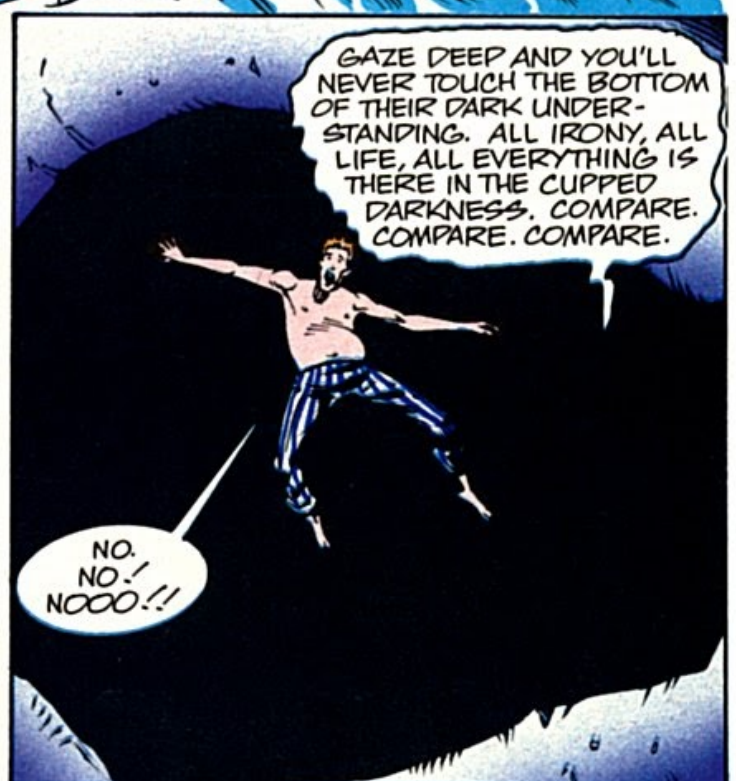
AREN'T YOU A LITTLE PLUMP?

ME, I'M SLENDER, SVELTE, ECONOMICAL OF LINE AND CONTOUR. EXQUISITELY CARVED ORIENTAL IVORY! PERFECT, THIN AS A WHITE PRAYING MANTIS!



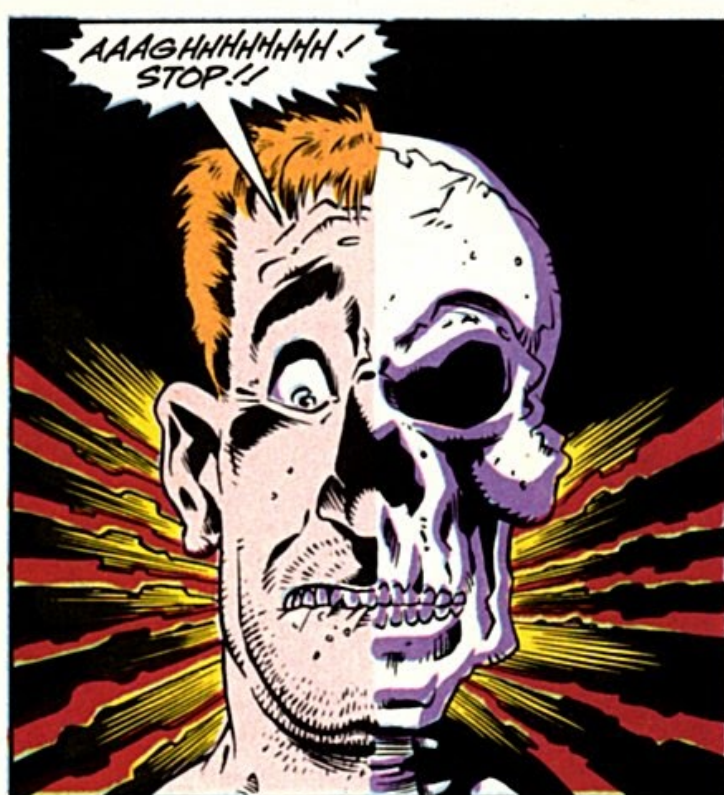
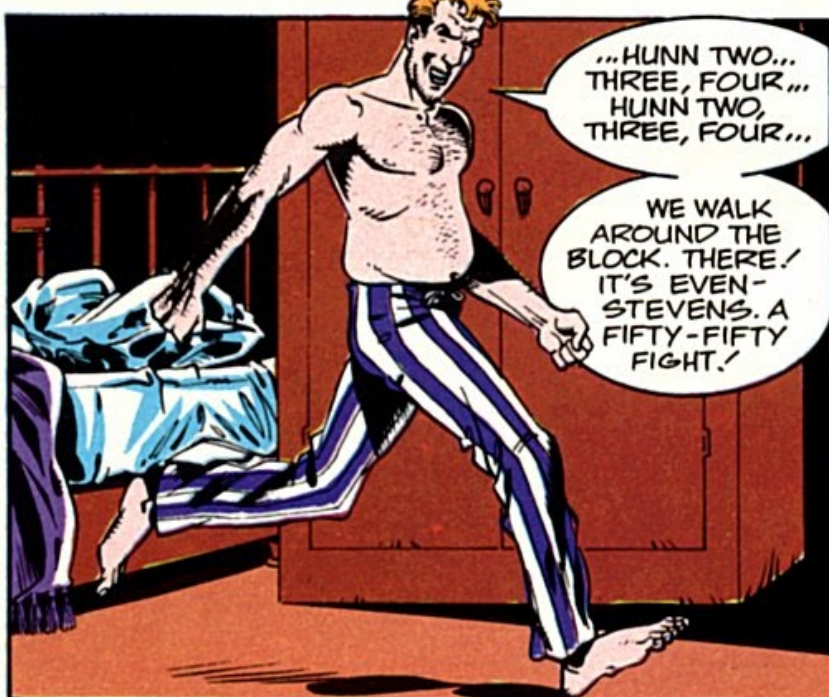
YOUR EYES ARE ORDINARY, PROTUBERANT, NUMB LOOKING!

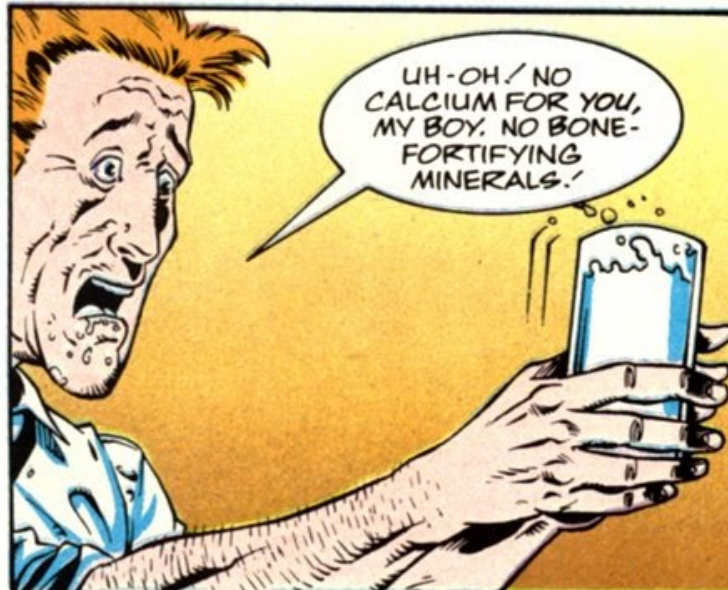
MINE, SO DEEP AND ROUNDED... SOMBER, QUIET POOLS... ALL KNOWING, ALL ETERNAL.



GAZE DEEP AND YOU'LL NEVER TOUCH THE BOTTOM OF THEIR DARK UNDERSTANDING. ALL IRONY, ALL LIFE, ALL EVERYTHING IS THERE IN THE CUPPED DARKNESS. COMPARE. COMPARE. COMPARE.

NO.
NO!
NOOOO!!







THE WEEK WEARS ON. THE FLESH WEARS OFF...

150 POUNDS. DO YOU SEE HOW I'VE CHANGED?

FOR THE BETTER. YOU WERE ALWAYS A LITTLE PLUMP FOR YOUR HEIGHT.



I LIKE YOUR FACE. IT'S SO MUCH NICER-- THE LINES ARE SO FIRM AND STRONG NOW.

THEY'RE NOT MY LINES, THEY'RE HIS, DAMN HIM!



HIS? OH, HONEY. I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU LATELY, YOU LOOK... HAUNTED. YOU TOSS IN BED AT NIGHT. MAYBE YOU SHOULD SEE A PSYCHIATRIST.



I CAN TELL YOU WHAT HE'D SAY... YOU AND YOUR SKELETON ARE ONE AND THE SAME.



...ONE NATION, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. UNITED YOU STAND, DIVIDED YOU FALL.

SKELETONS ARE STRANGE. UNWIELDY THINGS...

...THE MORE YOU WORRY, THE MORE YOUR BONES STICK OUT.

TAKE THAT TRIP TO PHOENIX YOU'VE STEWED ABOUT FOR MONTHS. DO YOU GOOD TO TRAVEL.

ONE HAS TO WANT HELP, OR THE DOCTOR IS USELESS.



AND SO... HARRIS
GOES TO PHOENIX.

...WHETHER OR NOT I
GET THE LOAN FOR MY
BUSINESS, IT'S STILL
A GOOD THING TO
GET AWAY, GET
SOME DISTANCE...

...PUT
IT ALL
BEHIND ME...
HUH? NO.!

YAAHHH!!

WHE WHEE
WHE WHEE

LATER...

SO THAT'S IT,
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER,
YOU'LL WALK ME, STARVE ME...

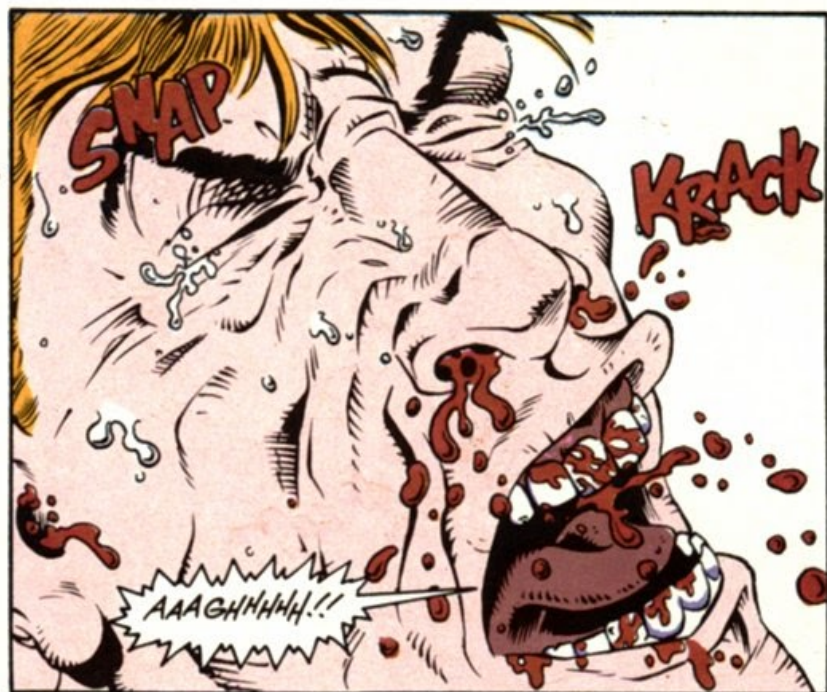
...THIRST ME, KILL
ME. SUN COOK THE
FLESH OFF SO YOU
CAN PEEK OUT.

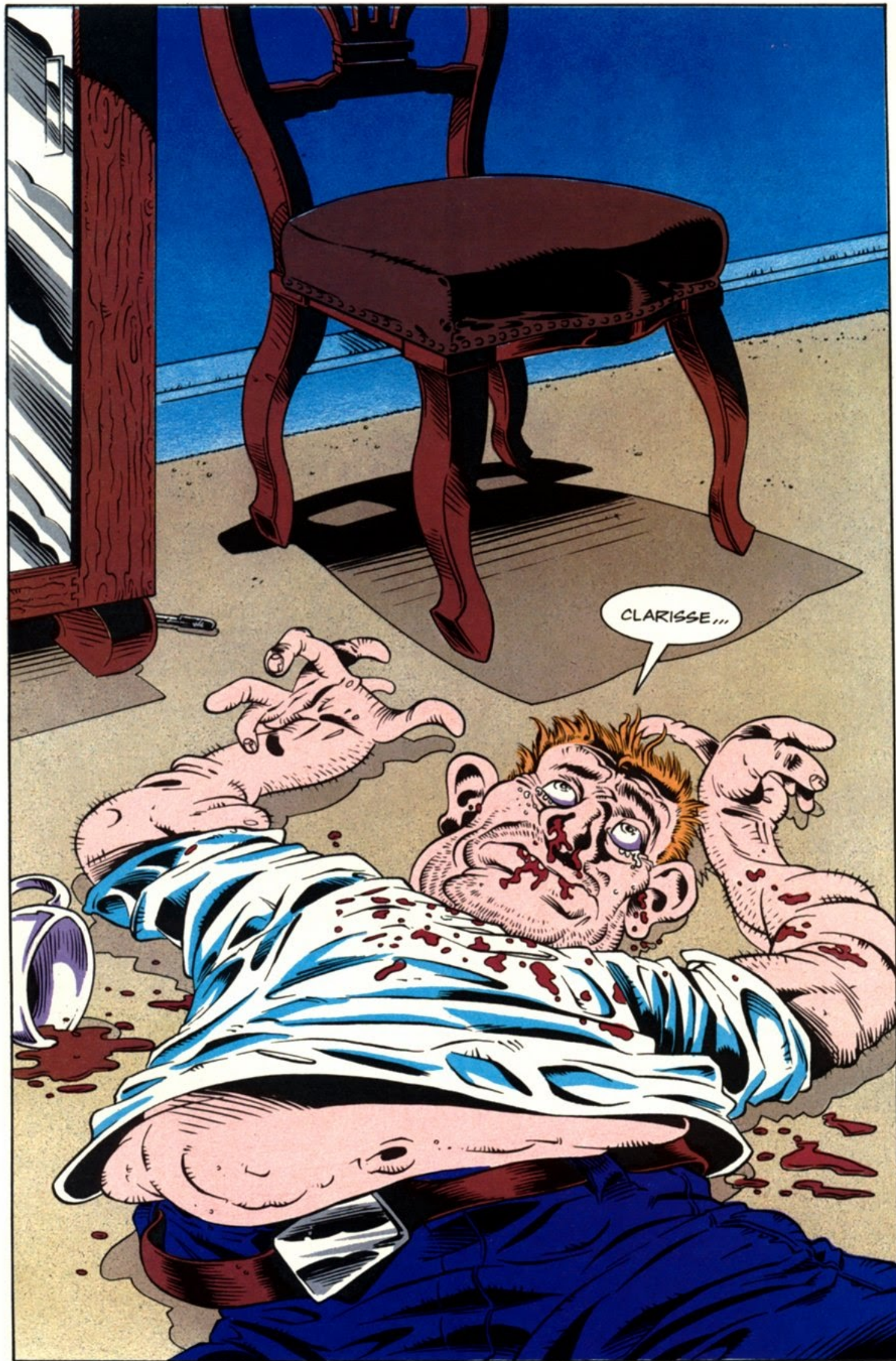
VULTURES
LUNCH OFF ME,
AND THERE YOU'LL
LIE, GRINNING
WITH VICTORY.

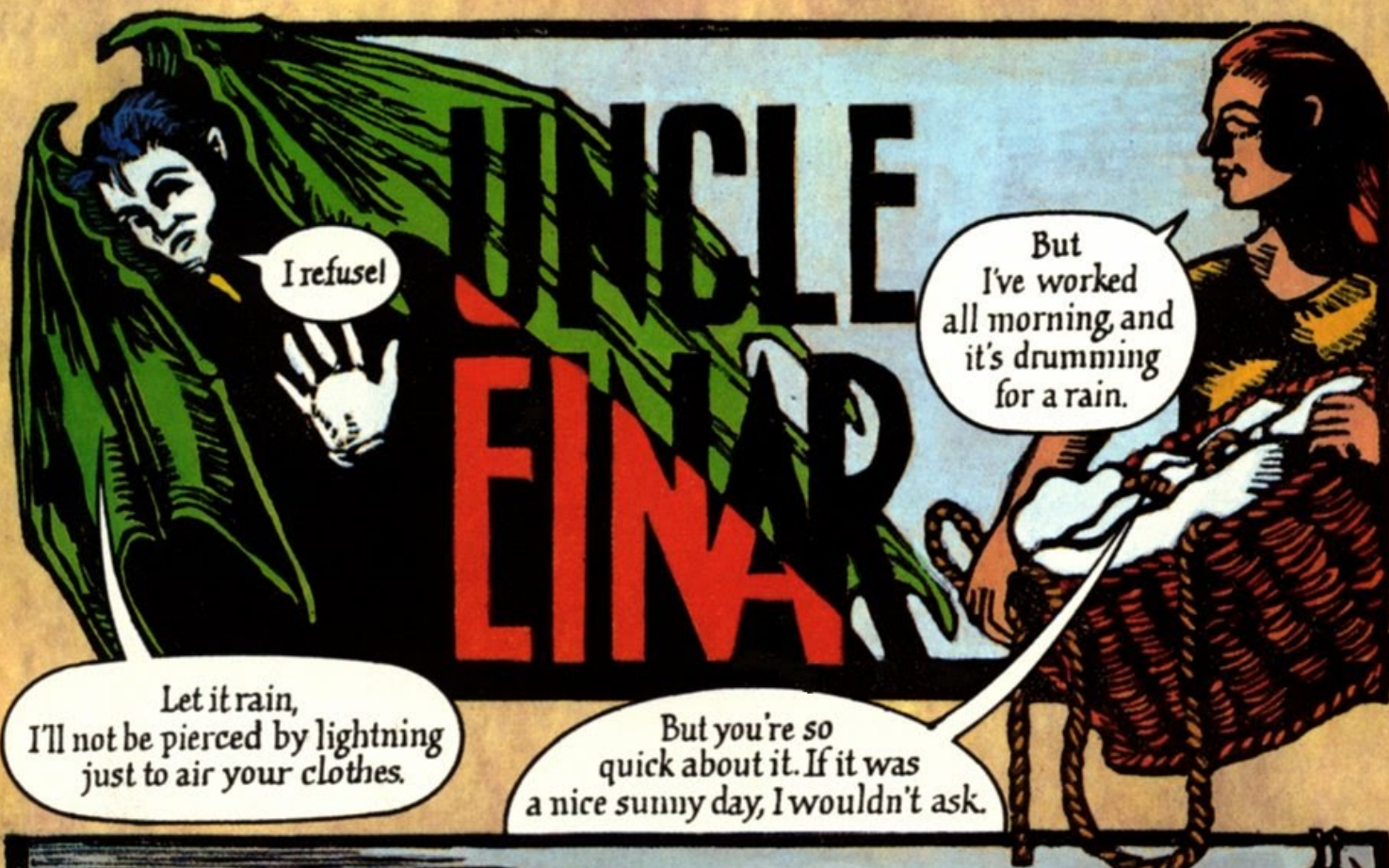
HEY!

NICE
DAY FOR
A WALK,
BUSTER.









I refuse!

But I've worked all morning, and it's drumming for a rain.

Let it rain, I'll not be pierced by lightning just to air your clothes.

But you're so quick about it. If it was a nice sunny day, I wouldn't ask.

Up he jumped. His wings chewed and loved the cool air. He sailed low across his farmland, trailing the clothes in a vast fluttering loop through the pounding concussion and backwash of his wings.



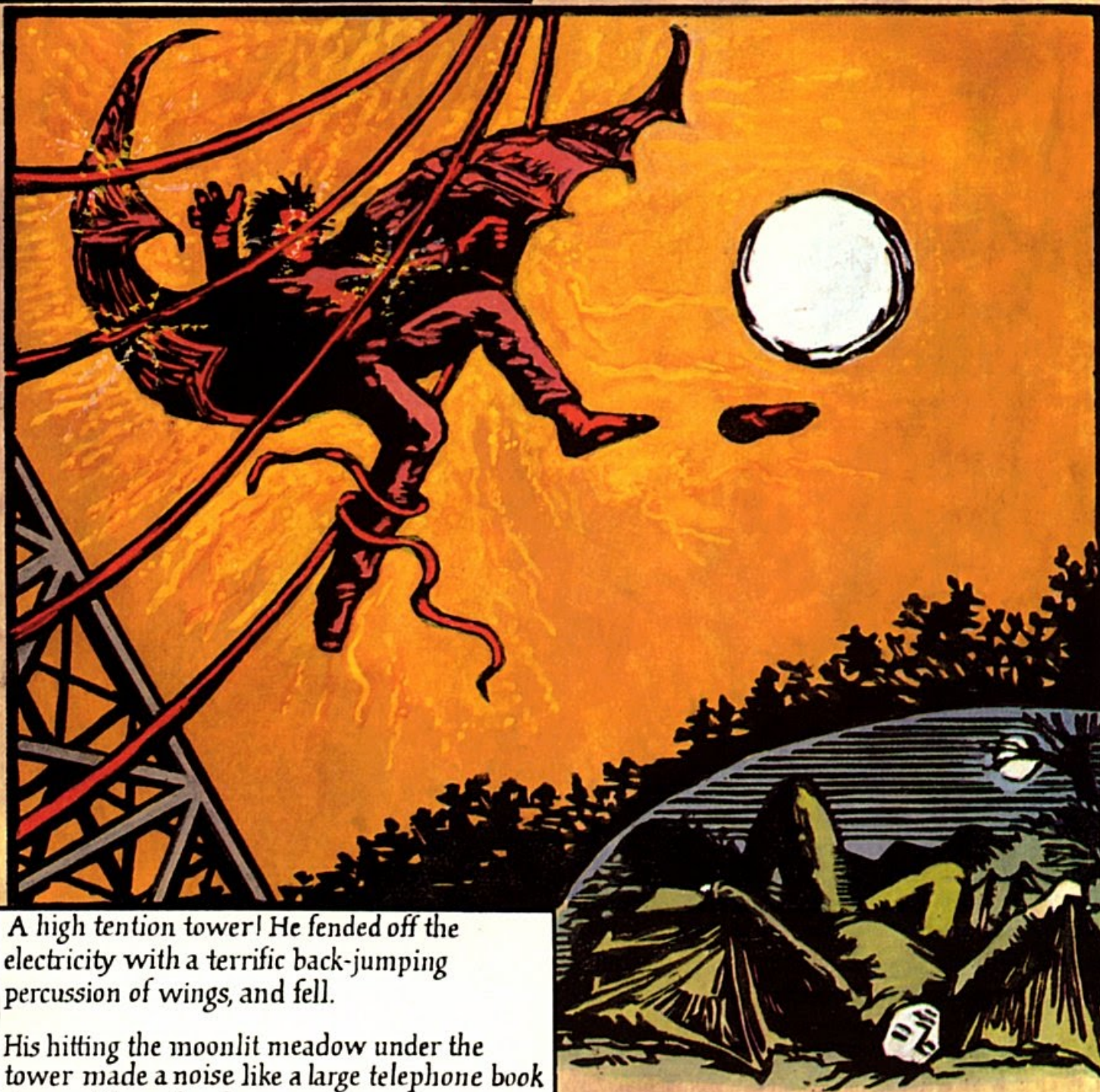
Uncle Einar was one of the few in the *family* whose talent was visible. In his youth, Einar had always flown nights. But no more. One night,

some years ago, he had drunk too much rich crimson wine.



He was on his way home to some high mountain pass in Europe after a *homecoming* among *family* members in Illinois.

"I'll be all right," he had told himself. And then—
crack out of the sky—



A high tension tower! He fended off the electricity with a terrific back-jumping percussion of wings, and fell.

His hitting the moonlit meadow under the tower made a noise like a large telephone book dropped from the sky.

When he rose it was morning. There was nothing to do but take refuge in the forest. In this fashion he met his wife



Young Brunilla Wexley was out to milk a lost cow. It was a sweet excuse for forest-journeying and flower-chewing—which she was doing as she stumbled across Uncle Einar.



Oh,
A man. In a
camp tent.

Einar awoke. The camp tent spread like a large green fan behind him. Brunilla saw a man with wings. She was startled, yes. But not afraid.

She began to talk. In an hour they were old friends.



That
wing looks
very bad. You'd
better let me
take you home
to fix it.

Thank you,
but I could not
possibly accept.

But
I live alone.
For, as you see,
I am ugly.

No--
not at all.

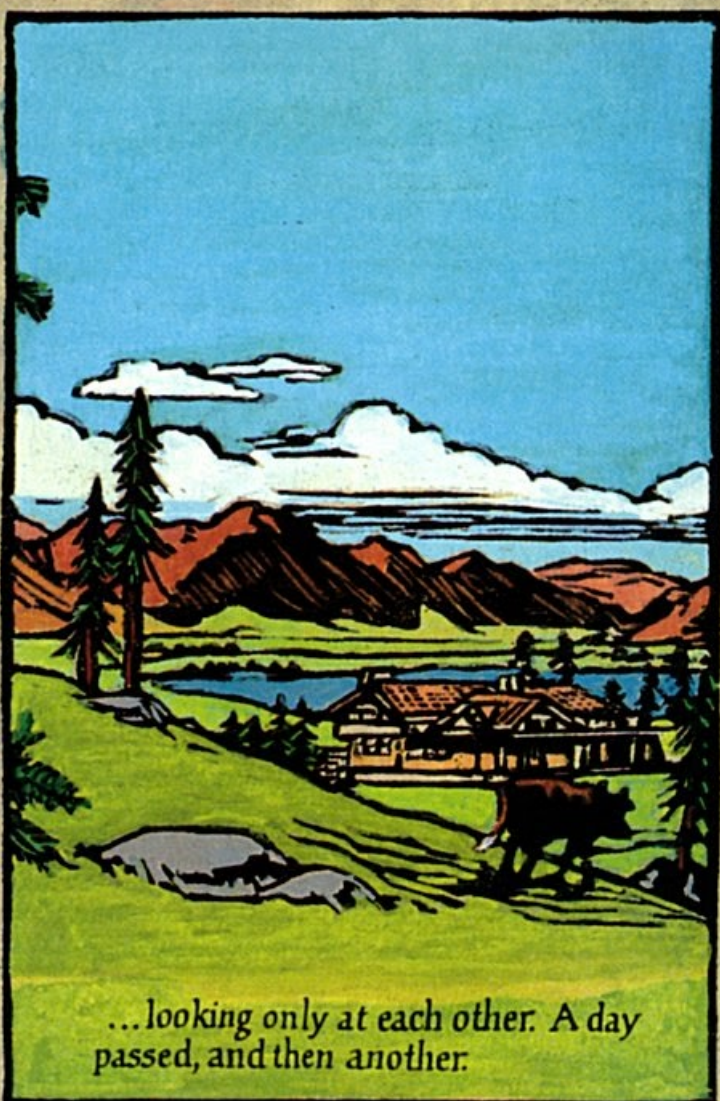
She thanked him and said that she was all alone on a big farm, and was in need of talking company.



You need
treatment, an ointment
for the burn across your face.
How'd it happen?



Then they were at her farm—hardly noticing they'd walked a mile...



...looking only at each other. A day passed, and then another.



Thank you for the care, the lodging, the company, but I must be going.



It is twilight now. By five tomorrow morning, I must have crossed an ocean and a continent. Thank you... and goodbye.

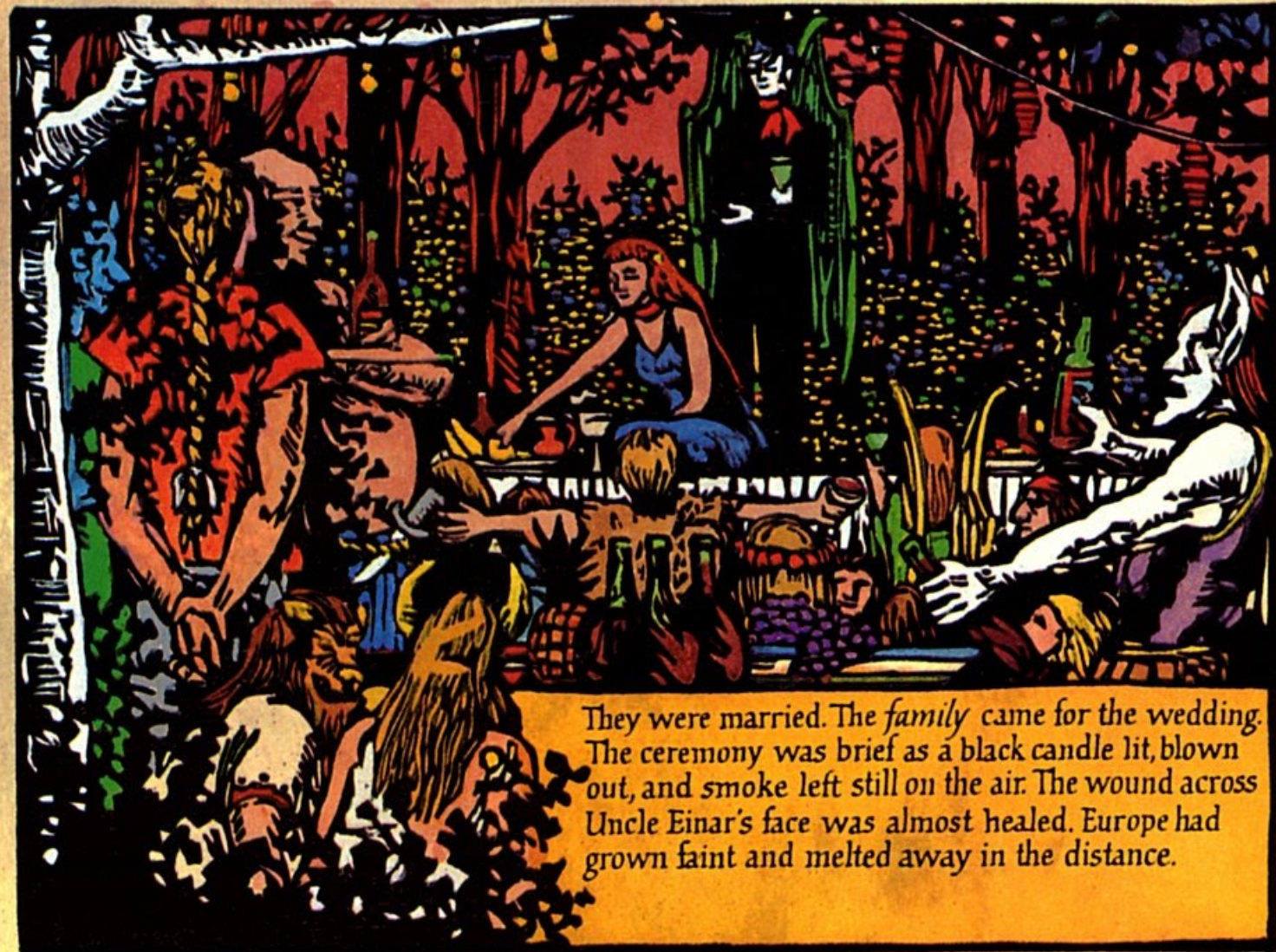
Einar flew off in the dusk and crashed right into a maple tree. Brunilla ran to his unconscious body.



When he awoke he knew he'd never fly at night again. His delicate night-perception was gone.

How can I go to Europe now? Brunilla, tell me-- what shall I do?

Oh, we'll think of something...



They were married. The family came for the wedding. The ceremony was brief as a black candle lit, blown out, and smoke left still on the air. The wound across Uncle Einar's face was almost healed. Europe had grown faint and melted away in the distance.





He didn't have to see very well to fly straight up, or come straight down. It was only natural on this night of their wedding that he take Brunilla in his arms and fly right up into the sky.

A farmer glanced at a low cloud at midnight, saw faint glows and crackles. "Heat lightning," he observed. They didn't come down till morning.



Their marriage took. He found great beauty behind her face, great kindness and understanding. He made some changes in his diet

to fit her thinking, and was careful with his wings around the house.

This was his marriage.



Four children were born, three boys and a girl. On hot summer days they asked their father to sit under the apple tree, fan them with his

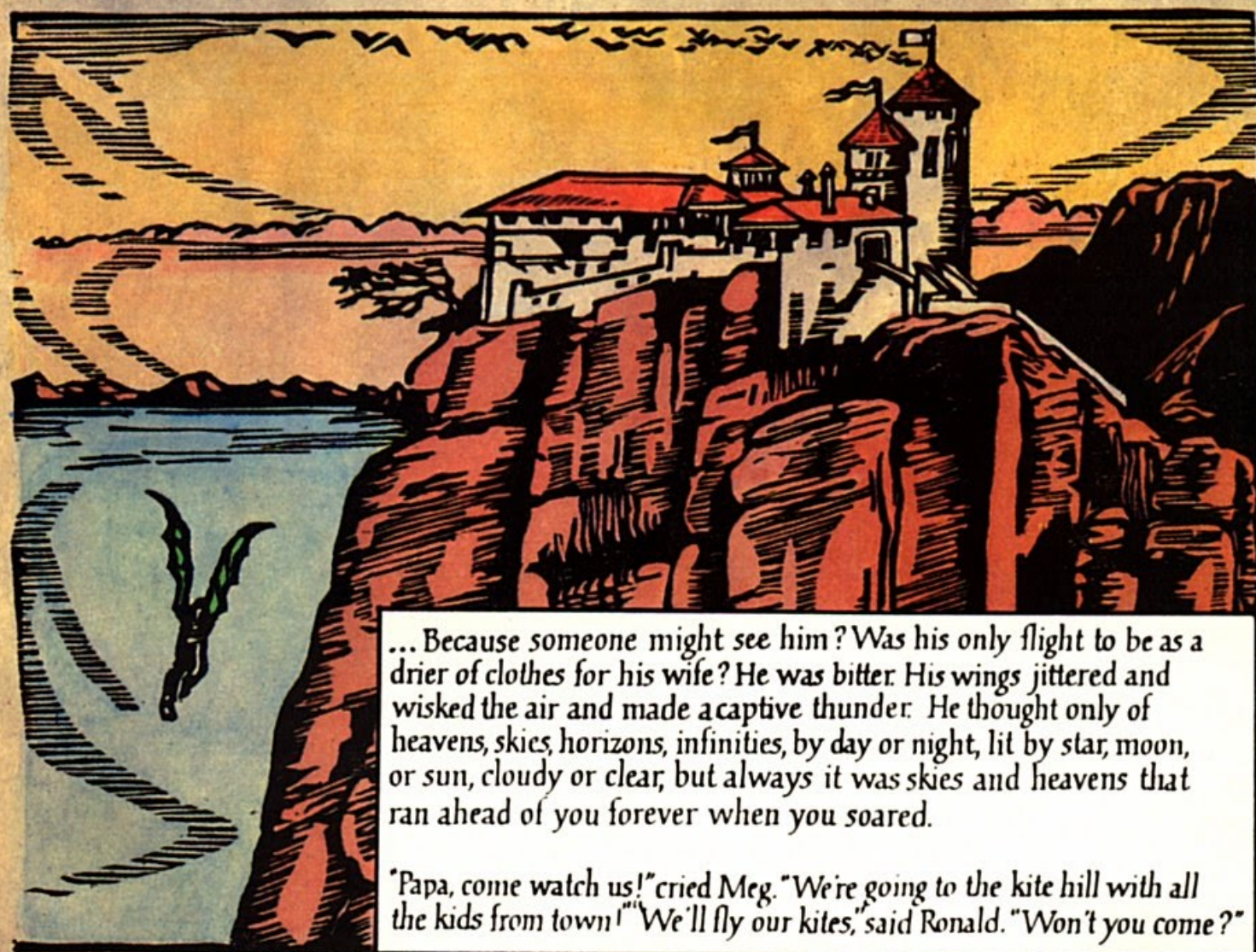
cooling wings, and tell them wild starlit tales of how a star tastes melting in your mouth, and how to drink cold mountain air.



And today, six years later, Uncle Einar sat there festering, growing impatient and unkind because

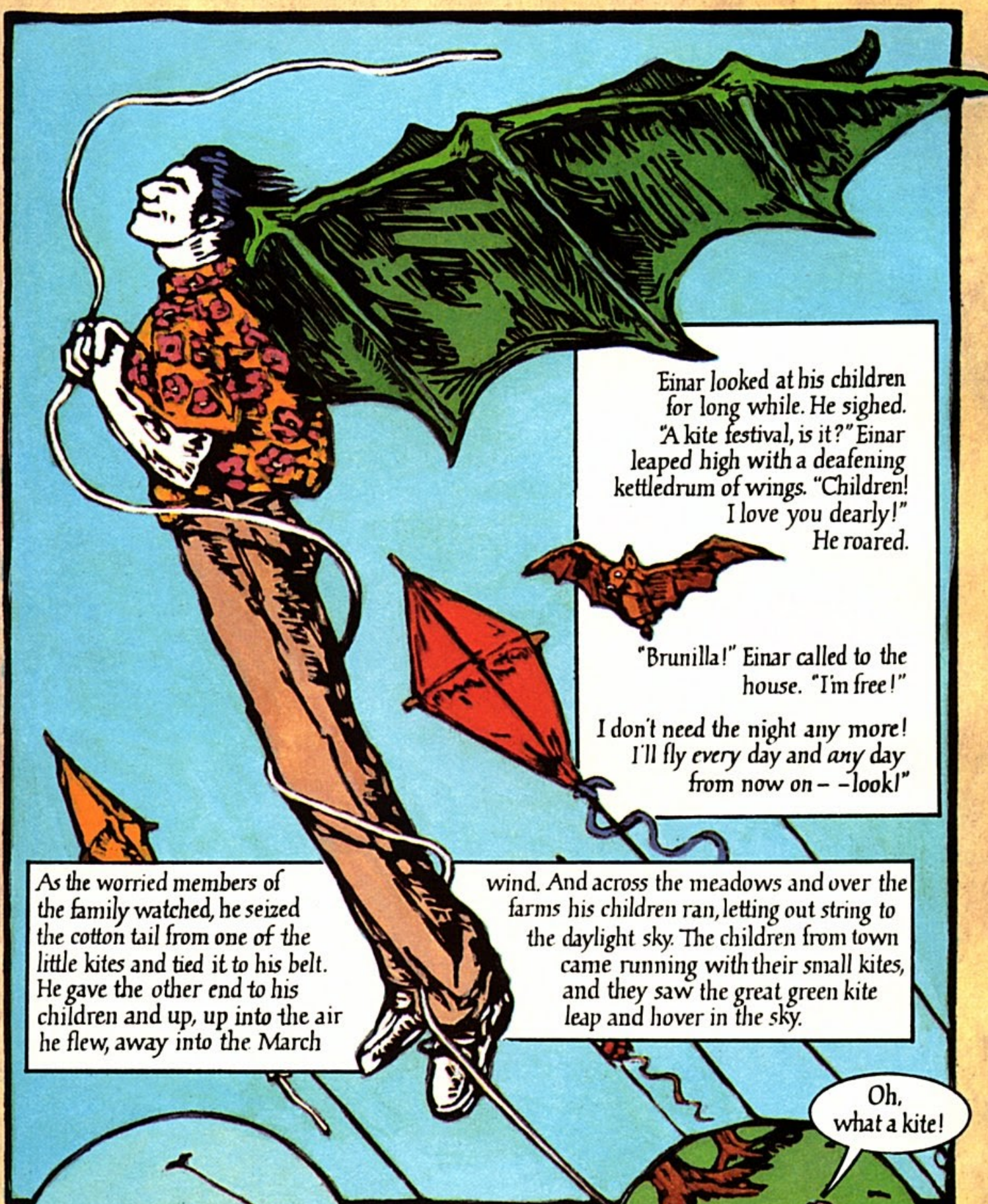


he was still unable to fly the wild night sky. Was he to sit here forever, afraid to fly by day...



... Because someone might see him? Was his only flight to be as a drier of clothes for his wife? He was bitter. His wings jittered and whisked the air and made a captive thunder. He thought only of heavens, skies, horizons, infinities, by day or night, lit by star, moon, or sun, cloudy or clear, but always it was skies and heavens that ran ahead of you forever when you soared.

"Papa, come watch us!" cried Meg. "We're going to the kite hill with all the kids from town!" "We'll fly our kites," said Ronald. "Won't you come?"



Einar looked at his children for long while. He sighed. "A kite festival, is it?" Einar leaped high with a deafening kettledrum of wings. "Children! I love you dearly!" He roared.

"Brunilla!" Einar called to the house. "I'm free!"

I don't need the night any more!
I'll fly every day and any day
from now on -- look!

As the worried members of the family watched, he seized the cotton tail from one of the little kites and tied it to his belt. He gave the other end to his children and up, up into the air he flew, away into the March

wind. And across the meadows and over the farms his children ran, letting out string to the daylight sky. The children from town came running with their small kites, and they saw the great green kite leap and hover in the sky.

Oh, what a kite!

I wish I had a kite like that! Where did you get it?

Our father made it!

Home to stay!

Wood.

PROLOGUE: THE CHILD'S NAME IS JIMMY...JIMMY FAWCETT! HE STANDS BESIDE HIS MOTHER, ELAINE FAWCETT, IN THE GARDEN OF THEIR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SOLAR-HOME! ABOVE THEM, THE NIGHT SKY HANGS LIKE A GIGANTIC BLACK UMBRELLA, FLECKED WITH COUNTLESS STAR-HOLES! THE MOTHER'S FACE IS ANXIOUS AS SHE GAZES UP AT THE TWINKLING DIAMOND-SUNS! THE BOY'S EYES SHINE IN CHILDLIKE ADORATION...

MOMMY! WHEN...WHEN IS DADDY COMING HOME? HE'S BEEN GONE SO LONG THIS TIME!

I... I DON'T KNOW, JIMMY! SOON... I HOPE! VERY SOON!



THEY STAND IN SILENT AWE SURVEYING THE CELESTIAL MAGIC ABOVE THEM! SUDDENLY THE BOY GASPS! HE LIFTS A CHUBBY HAND AND POINTS! ACROSS THE WHITE-DOTTED BLACK, A METEOR PLUMMETS EARTHWARD... ITS FLAMING TRAIL A FAINT LINE OF LIGHT STRETCHING OUT BEHIND IT...

LOOK, MOMMY! LOOK! A FALLING STAR!

QUICKLY, JIMMY DEAR! MAKE A WISH... MAKE A WISH!



THE BOY'S FACE BRIGHTENS! HE SMILES AS HE WATCHES THE SHOOTING STAR STREAK ACROSS THE NIGHT SKY! A CHILDISH GIGGLE ESCAPES FROM HIS TINY LIPS! HE SIGHS...

HURRY, JIMMY! MAKE A WISH!

I WISH... I WISH...



STORY: DAN FAWCETT HAD BEEN A ROCKET-PILOT EVEN BEFORE HIS LITTLE SON HAD BEEN BORN! IN FACT, ONE OF THE REASONS HE AND ELAINE HAD HAD JIMMY WAS TO FILL HER LONELY HOURS WHEN HE WAS AWAY ... OUT THERE...



JIMMY WAS ALMOST THREE WHEN HIS DADDY CAME BACK! ELAINE HAD BEEN RIGHT! HE DIDN'T *KNOW* HIS FATHER! THE FIRST TIME JIMMY SAW HIS DADDY, HE BEGAN TO CRY...



IT TOOK A FEW WEEKS FOR LITTLE TODDLING JIMMY TO WARM UP TO DAN! BUT AFTER A WHILE, HE WAS CLAMBERING ALL OVER HIS FATHER AS IF DAN HAD NEVER BEEN AWAY...



YEAH, ELAINE! I KNOW! YOU'RE RIGHT! I'LL... I'LL GO DOWN TO 'INTERPLANETARY' ONE OF THESE DAYS AND TELL THEM I'M *RESIGNING!*

OH, DAN! *PROMISE?*

LOOKA, DADDY! WOCKET-SHIP... *VOOOOM!*



BUT DAN NEVER DID RESIGN FROM 'INTERPLANETARY'! HE JUST COULDN'T! AND AS THE WEEKS AND MONTHS DRAGGED BY, DAN BECAME MORE AND MORE RESTLESS! AT NIGHT, HE WOULD GO OUT INTO THE GARDEN AND LOOK UP AT THE STAR-STUDDED SKY...

ELAINE WOULD STAND BESIDE HIM QUIETLY... WAITING...

JIMMY'S... ASLEEP, DAN! HE... HE DROPPED OFF HUGGING THE MODEL ROCKET-SHIP YOU BROUGHT HIM!

I... I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU, BABY!



THERE... THERE'S NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, DARLING! I KNOW WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU! JIMMY... JIMMY AND I WILL BE HERE WHEN YOU... SOB... GET BACK!

I CAN'T HELP IT, ELAINE! I JUST CAN'T! IT'S IN MY BLOOD!



SO ONCE AGAIN, THE SPACE-MAN LEFT HIS WIFE AND CHILD TO ANSWER THE BECKONING CALL OF OTHER WORLDS! JIMMY WAS ALMOST SIX WHEN HIS PILOT-FATHER RETURNED...



AND I'VE MISSED BOTH OF YOU, HONEY! MISSED YOU *TERRIBLY!*

I TOLD THE OTHER KIDS 'BOUT YOU, DADDY! THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME! THEY SAID I HAD NO DADDY!

WELL, NOW YOU CAN... SHOW THEM ALL... SOB... CAN'T YOU, JIMMY?



JIMMY WAS PROUD OF DAN! ANY CHILD WOULD BE! JIMMY'S LITTLE FRIENDS LISTENED IN AMAZEMENT TO HIS FATHER'S EXCITING ADVENTURES...



TELL THEM ABOUT THE VENUSIAN MONSTER, DADDY! HOW YOU KILLED IT ALL BY YOURSELF!

GEE, TELL US, MR. FAWCETT!

BUT AT NIGHT, WHEN JIMMY WAS ASLEEP, AND ALL WAS STILL SAVE FOR THE WHOOSH OF AN OCCASIONAL JET-TRANSPORT OVERHEAD, DAN AND ELAINE WOULD TALK...



THE BOY IDOLIZES YOU, DAN! BUT KISSING YOUR PICTURE EVERY NIGHT WHILE YOU'RE OUT THERE ISN'T ENOUGH! HE NEEDS YOU WITH HIM... EVERY DAY...

I KNOW, ELAINE! I'VE GOT TO QUIT THIS TIME! THE YEARS ARE SLIPPING BY SO FAST! LAST TIME I WAS HOME, HE COULD HARDLY TALK! NOW...



I NEED YOU, TOO, DAN! THE PASSING YEARS AREN'T BEING KIND TO ME, EITHER!

YOU'RE AS LOVELY AS THE FIRST DAY WE MET, HONEY!



OH, DAN! PLEASE STAY HOME FOR GOOD! PLEASE!

I'LL TALK TO THEM, HONEY! I'LL TELL THEM...

BUT BY THE TIME TWO MONTHS HAD PASSED, DAN WAS OUT THERE AGAIN... IN THE GARDEN... LOOKING UP AT THE DISTANT BLAZING WORLDS...



IT...IT'S TIME AGAIN, ISN'T IT, DAN?

I...I'VE GOT TO, ELAINE! I...I'VE JUST GOT TO GO!



I UNDERSTAND, DAN! SOMEDAY YOU'LL STOP! I KNOW THAT! SOMEDAY YOU'LL COME HOME TO STAY!

OF COURSE I WILL, HON! OF COURSE...

THEY CAME DOWN TO THE ROCKET-PORT TO SEE DAN OFF! JIMMY STARED IN WONDERMENT AT THE GLEAMING ROCKET-SHIP TOWERING OVER THEM...



WELL, SON! YOU'LL BE ALMOST NINE THE NEXT TIME I SEE YOU!

GEE, DADDY! MUST YOU GO?



DAN PICKED UP HIS SMILING BOY IN HIS STRONG ARMS! THE SPACE-PILOT'S EYES FILLED WITH TEARS...



THEY WATCHED AS THE SILVER GIANT ROSE HIGHER AND HIGHER...ITS TRAIL OF ROCKET EXHAUST DISAPPEARING INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT...

JIMMY AND HIS MOTHER WATCHED DAN STRIDE ACROSS THE LAUNCHING SITE AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE SHIP! THEY HELD THEIR EARS AS THE DEAFENING ROAR OF THE EXPLODING ROCKET FUEL LIFTED THE SHIP SKYWARD...



A YEAR PASSED! THEN TWO! THE BOY WAS EIGHT NOW...ALMOST NINE! HE WOULD GO OUT INTO THE GARDEN EACH NIGHT TO GAZE UP AT THE TWINKLING FAR-AWAY STARS! HIS MOTHER WOULD STAND BESIDE HIM...HER FACE ANXIOUS...



THOUSANDS OF MILES ABOVE THE EARTH, IN THE BLACK VOID OF SPACE, A ROCKET-SHIP HURTTLED HOMEWARD... **DAN FAWCETT'S** ROCKET-SHIP! AND AS IT APPROACHED EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD, AN ALARM SOUNDED...



CAPTAIN FAWCETT! CAPTAIN FAWCETT! SOMETHING'S **WRONG!** THE POWER PLANT'S **ATOMIC PILE IS LEAKING!**

EMERGENCY! EMERGENCY! DON SPACE-SUITS! DON SPACE-SUITS!

WHEN DAN CAME TO, HE FOUND HIMSELF STREAKING THROUGH SPACE... HIS SUIT INTACT! BEFORE HIM, THE HUGE GREEN SPHERE LOOMED LARGER AND LARGER...



I'M HEADED TOWARD EARTH! GOOD LORD!

FASTER AND FASTER DAN HURLED EARTHWARD, DRAGGED BY THE EVER-INCREASING PULL OF ITS GRAVITATION...



IT... IT'S GETTING WARMER! I'M... I'M ENTERING THE ATMOSPHERE!

THE MEN OF THE ROCKET-SHIP SCRAMBLED FOR THEIR PRESSURIZED SUITS! DAN GOT INTO HIS, JUST AS THE SHIP EXPLODED



THE HEAT INCREASED! THE PLASTO SPACE SUIT BEGAN TO SIZZLE... ITS OUTER LAYERS BURNING AWAY..



OH, LORD! I CAN'T STAND IT! AND I CAN'T STOP... CAN'T STOP!

EPILOGUE: WHEN A FALLING OBJECT FROM OUTER SPACE ENTERS THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, IT BEGINS TO **BURN** FROM THE FRICTON CAUSED BY ITS PASSING THROUGH THE AIR AT SUCH GREAT SPEED! TO A LITTLE BOY AND HIS MOTHER, FAR BELOW THIS INCANDESCENT BODY, IT WOULD APPEAR AS...



LOOK, MOMMY! LOOK! A FALLING STAR!

QUICKLY, JIMMY DEAR! MAKE A WISH... MAKE A WISH!

THE BOY'S FACE BRIGHTENS! HE SMILES AS HE WATCHES THE SHOOTING STAR STREAK ACROSS THE NIGHT SKY AND FADE AWAY AS IT BURNS OUT! A CHILDISH GIGGLE ESCAPES FROM HIS TINY LIPS ...



I WISH... I WISH MY DADDY WOULD COME HOME TONIGHT... HOME TO STAY!

RAY
BRADBURY
CHRONICLES

MARTIAN
CHRONICLES

I
The Off Season

II
Kaleidoscope



NANTIER • BEAL • MINOUSTCHINE
publishing inc.
new york

A BYRON PREISS VISUAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. BOOK

INTRODUCTION

More often than not, when I sit down at my typewriter, I provoke myself, let go with a single, sometimes quiet, sometimes violent concept. In the case of "Kaleidoscope," I asked myself, "What would happen if a spaceship exploded in space and all of the occupants, fully provisioned with oxygen, survived long enough to say their farewells to one another?" What you have here, in this illustrated tale, is exactly that. I didn't know from moment to moment what would happen next, what each character would shout, yell, or whisper. And when the story ended two hours of typing later, I was as astounded and touched as I hope you might be by the very last lines of the adventure when the burning "meteor" falls across the night sky. In the more than forty years since I wrote this story, it has been performed often on stage at high schools, universities, and theater societies. All you need is a dark stage, a few "stars," and some flashlights for each character's face. As the story moves, the flashlights go out, one by one, when the astronauts vanish forever. Very late in the day, I would like to dedicate this story to the Challenger dead and their survivors.

I imagine "The Off Season" was caused by my reading the critical works of Joseph Wood Krutch, one of the earliest ecologists, and seeing various issues of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* where the skinny lady models behaved outrageously in far places and outré climates. Seeing a Coca-Cola stand near the Egyptian Sphinx and Pyramids further irritated me. These were the grains of sand which, popped into my oyster-mouth, caused me to grow a pearl—or, if not a pearl, at least a somewhat amusing tale about the first man to build a hot-dog stand on Mars. Once I dreamed up the man and the hot dogs, the story fell into place and was finished within that afternoon. I would like to think that Joseph Wood Krutch would have approved of it.

Ron Bradley

The OFFSEASON

HERE WE
ARE! YES, SIR,
LOOK AT THAT!
AIN'T THAT
BEAUTIFUL,
ELMA?

SURE, SAM.

THIS WAS A CROSSROADS WHERE TWO
DEAD HIGHWAYS CAME AND WENT IN
DARKNESS. HERE, SAM PARKHILL HAD
FLUNG UP THIS RIVETED ALUMINUM
STRUCTURE, GARISH WITH WHITE
LIGHT, TREMBLING WITH JUKEBOX
MELODY.



BOY,
WHAT A CHANGE
FOR ME! IF THE
BOYS FROM THE
FOURTH EXPEDITION
COULD SEE
ME NOW!



HE FIXED A BORDER OF
BROKEN GLASS HE HAD
PLACED ON THE FOOTPATH.
HE HAD BROKEN THE GLASS
FROM SOME OLD MARTIAN
BUILDINGS IN THE HILLS.

BEST
HOT DOGS ON
TWO WORLDS! FIRST
MAN ON MARS WITH
A HOT-DOG
STAND!



HERE'S
THE MAIN
HIGHWAYS, OVER
THERE IS THE DEAD
CITY AND THE MINERAL
DEPOSITS. THOSE TRUCKS
FROM EARTH SETTLEMENT
101 WILL HAVE TO PASS
HERE TWENTY-FOUR
HOURS A DAY!



DO I KNOW MY LOCATIONS,
OR WHAT?



YOU THINK
TEN THOUSAND NEW-TYPE
WORK ROCKETS WILL COME
THROUGH TO MARS?

IN A
MONTH! WHY YOU
LOOK SO FUNNY?

I DON'T
TRUST THOSE EARTH
PEOPLE.



I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE THEM ROCKETS ARRIVE WITH THE 100,000 MEXICANS AND CHINESE ON THEM.

CUSTOMERS! 100,000 HUNGRY PEOPLE!

IF THERE'S NO ATOMIC WAR. I DON'T TRUST NO ATOM BOMBS. THERE'S SO MANY ON EARTH NOW, YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

Ah...

FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE CAUGHT A BLUE FLICKER. SOMETHING FLOATED IN THE AIR GENTLY BEHIND HIM.

THE MASK NODDED.

SAM, A FRIEND OF YOURS TO SEE YOU.

MR. PARKHILL, I'VE COME TO SPEAK TO YOU AGAIN.

SO YOU'RE BACK AGAIN!


I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU I DON'T WANT YOU NEAR HERE!





WE
MEAN YOU NO
HARM.

BUT I
MEAN YOU
HARM!




I DON'T LIKE
MARTIANS! I NEVER
SEEN ONE BEFORE. IT AIN'T
NATURAL. ALL THESE YEARS
YOU GUYS HIDE, AND ALL OF
A SUDDEN YOU PICK ON
ME. LEAVE ME ALONE!


WE COME
FOR AN IMPORTANT
REASON.

IN A
WAY, IT'S
ABOUT THE
LAND.

WELL, THE OLD
GOT TO GIVE WAY TO
THE NEW. THAT'S THE LAW
OF GIVE AND TAKE. I GOT A
GUN HERE. AFTER YOU LEFT
THIS MORNING, I GOT IT
OUT AND LOADED IT.



IF IT'S
ABOUT THIS
LAND, IT'S
MINE.



WE MARTIANS
ARE TELEPATHIC. WE ARE
IN CONTACT WITH ONE OF
YOUR TOWNS ACROSS THE
DEAD SEA. HAVE YOU
LISTENED TO YOUR
RADIO?

A SILVER HAND GESTURED.
A BRONZE TUBE APPEARED
IN IT.

LET ME
SHOW YOU
THIS.

MY
RADIO'S
BUSTED.

THEN YOU
DON'T KNOW.
THERE'S BIG NEWS.
IT CONCERNS
EARTH...

A GUN!

AN INSTANT
LATER SAM FIRED
INTO THE MIST, THE
ROBE, THE BLUE
MASK.

SAM STOOD GASPING.
HIS WIFE SWAYED
OVER THE HUDDLED PILE.

THAT'S NO
WEAPON. HE WAS GOING
TO SHOW YOU A
MESSAGE.

THAT MARTIAN
PICTURE-WRITING. IT
WASN'T ANYTHING. LET
IT GO-- THERE MAY BE
OTHERS! GET THE
SHOVEL!

WHAT'RE
YOU GOING
TO DO?

BURY
HIM, OF
COURSE!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE
SHOT HIM.

IT WAS
A MISTAKE!
QUICK!

AT EIGHT O'CLOCK HE WAS BACK
SWEEPING THE FRONT OF THE
HOT-DOG STAND SELF-CONSCIOUSLY.

I'M SORRY
WHAT HAPPENED. YOU
KNOW IT WAS PURELY
THE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF FATE.

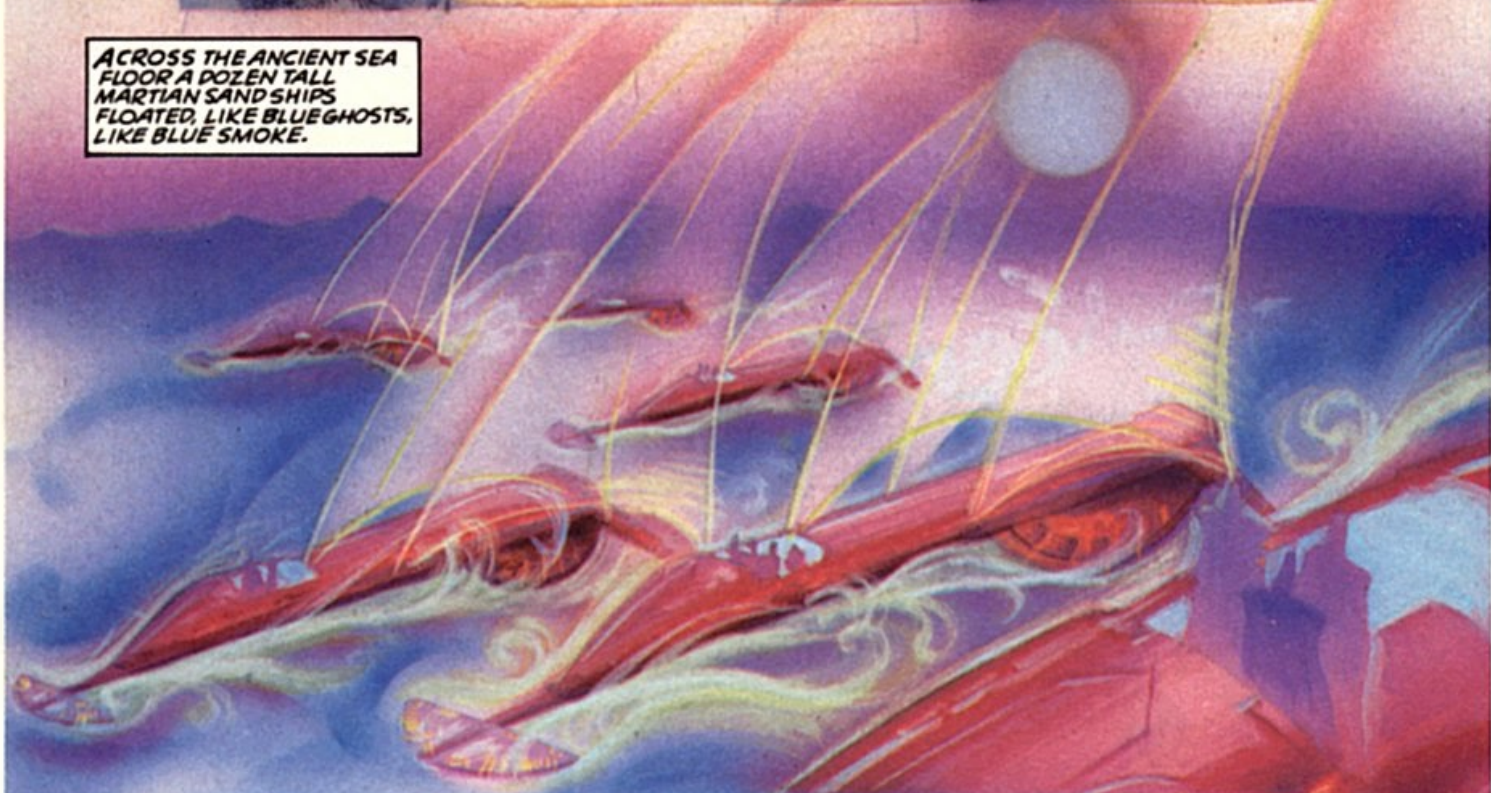


SAND SHIPS!
BUT THERE AREN'T
ANY MORE, ELMA.

LOOK!



ACROSS THE ANCIENT SEA
FLOOR A DOZEN TALL
MARTIAN SAND SHIPS
FLOATED, LIKE BLUE GHOSTS,
LIKE BLUE SMOKE.



THEY'LL KILL
ME! GET IN OUR
TRUCK, QUICK!




THE TRUCK
DON'T SEEM TO
BE IN RUNNING
CONDITION.

THE SAND SHIP!
I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THIS
WHOLE DAMN TERRITORY'S
GOT ONE AND KNOWS
HOW TO RUN ONE.

NOT
ANY
MORE...

THE WIND HURLED THE SAND SHIP KEENING OVER THE DEAD SEA BOTTOM, OVER LONG-BURIED CRYSTALS, PAST UPENDED PILLARS, PAST DESERTED DOCKS OF MARBLE AND BRASS, PAST DEAD WHITE CHESS CITIES, PAST PURPLE FOOTHILLS, INTO DISTANCE. THE FIGURES OF THE MARTIAN SHIPS RECEDED AND THEN BEGAN TO PACE SAM'S SHIP.



GUESS I
SHOWED THEM, BY
GOD! I'M PRETTY
QUICK!

THEY
COULD HAVE STOPPED
YOU IF THEY WANTED.
THEY JUST DIDN'T
BOTHR.



COME OFF
IT. NO, THEY WEREN'T
QUICK ENOUGH,
IS ALL.

WEREN'T
THEY?

GO BACK.


NO.
GET OFF MY
SHIP!

THIS
ISN'T YOUR
SHIP. IT'S AS OLD AS
OUR WORLD. IT
SAILED THE SAND SEAS
TEN THOUSAND YEARS
AGO WHEN THE SEAS
WERE WHISPERED
AWAY.

THERE WAS A SOUND AS OF A
THIN PLATE OF GLASS BROKEN--
LAUGHTER. THEN SILENCE. HE
TURNED.

WE NEED TO
TALK WITH YOU.
SOMETHING
IMPORTANT HAS
HAPPENED.

GET
OFF MY
SHIP!




WE ONLY...


THE GIRL, IN THE GUNFIRE, IN THE HEAT, IN THE CONCUSSION, FOLDED LIKE A SOFT SCARF, MELTED LIKE A CRYSTAL FIGURINE.



SAM,
STOP THE
SHIP.



NO, YOU DON'T!
NOT AFTER ALL THIS TIME,
YOU'RE NOT PULLING
OUT ON ME!




I BELIEVE
YOU WOULD, YOU
ACTUALLY
WOULD.

THEY WERE PASSING A LITTLE WHITE CHESS CITY, AND IN HIS RAGE HE SENT SIX BULLETS CRASHING AMONG THE CRYSTAL TOWERS. THE CITY DISSOLVED IN A SHOWER OF ANCIENT GLASS AND SPLINTERED QUARTZ.

I'LL SHOW THEM! I'LL SHOW EVERYBODY!

GO AHEAD, SHOW US, SAM.

THE BLUE PHANTOM SHIPS LOOMED UP, DRAWING STEADILY APACE. IN THE SHIPS WERE DARK BLUE IMAGES, MASKED MEN, MEN WITH SILVERY FACES, MEN WITH BLUE STARS FOR EYES, MEN WITH CARVED GOLDEN EARS, MEN WITH TINFOIL CHEEKS AND RUBY-STUDDED LIPS, MEN WITH ARMS FOLDED. MARTIAN MEN.




IT WAS NO USE. HE THREW OUT THE ANCHOR. THE SAIL FLUTTERED DOWN, FOLDING INTO ITSELF, SIGHING. MARS STOOD STILL AS THE MAJESTIC VESSELS OF THE MARTIANS DREW AROUND.

EARTH MAN.

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE!

THERE WEREN'T MANY MARTIANS LEFT ON MARS AND MOST OF THEM WERE HERE NOW. THE SILVERINE MASKS GLINTED.



THE SILVER MASKS DID NOT MOVE. HE FELT HIS STOMACH CLENCH IN, WITHER, BECOME A ROCK. HE THREW HIS GUN IN THE SAND.


I GIVE UP.

PICK UP YOUR GUN.

WHAT?

YOUR GUN. PICK IT UP. PUT IT AWAY.

UNBELIEVING, HE PICKED UP THE GUN.



NOW TURN
YOUR SHIP AROUND. WE
WILL NOT HARM YOU. YOU RAN
AWAY BEFORE WE WERE ABLE
TO EXPLAIN. COME.

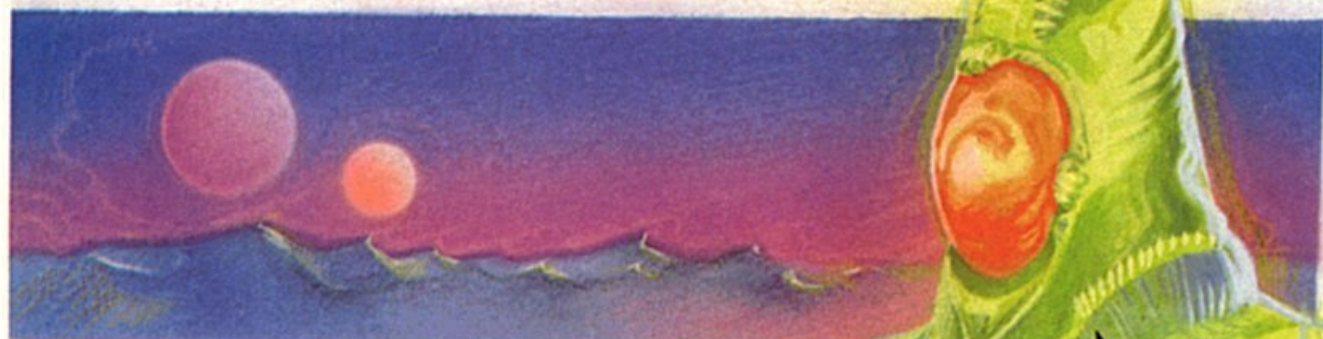
NOW THE GREAT SHIPS TURNED
AS LIGHTLY AS MOON THISTLES.
THEIR WING-SAILS FLAPPED
WITH A SOUND OF SOFT
APPLAUSE IN THE AIR.

IN HALF AN HOUR THEY
WERE BACK AT THE
CROSSROADS.

READY YOUR
STAND. PREPARE THE
VIANDS. PREPARE THE
STRANGE WINES, FOR
TONIGHT IS INDEED A
GREAT NIGHT!

YOU MEAN,
YOU'LL LET ME STAY
ON HERE? YOU'RE
NOT MAD AT ME?

PREPARE
YOUR PLACE OF
FOOD, AND
TAKE THIS.



WHAT IS IT?

IT IS THE LAND GRANT TO ALL OF THE TERRITORY FROM THE SILVER MOUNTAINS TO THE BLUE HILLS, FROM THE DEAD SALT SEA TO THE DISTANT VALLEYS OF MOONSTONE AND EMERALD.



BUT WHY...WHY ARE YOU GIVING ME ALL THIS?

THAT IS NOT ALL, HERE.

WHY, THAT'S HALF OF MARS! I OWN HALF OF MARS! ELMA, DID YOU HEAR?



I HEARD...



SHE SEEMED TO BE WATCHING FOR SOMETHING. SHE WAS BECOMING A LITTLE MORE ALERT NOW.

THANK
YOU, OH,
THANK
YOU!

TONIGHT IS
THE NIGHT. YOU
MUST BE
READY.

ARE THE
ROCKETS COMING
THROUGH EARLIER
THAN WE THOUGHT
FROM EARTH?

WE LEAVE
YOU PREPARE.
THE LAND IS
YOURS.



THE MASK FLOATED
ON THE WIND.



COME ON!
WE'VE GOT TO GET
THE PLACE FIXED!
OH, BOY, THIS IS
MY LUCKY
DAY!

IN THE BLOWING MOONLIGHT THE OLD SHIPS
TURNED AND MOVED OVER THE SHIFTING
SANDS. THE MASK'S BEAMING AND GLITTERING.
UNTIL THE LAST SHINE, THE LAST BLUE COLOR,
WAS LOST AMONG THE HILLS.

A HALF HOUR LATER HE
LOOKED AND SAW IT, FULL
AND BLUE, LIKE A FINE-CUT
STONE, ABOVE THE HILLS.

GOOD OLD
WONDERFUL EARTH!
COME ON, YOU EARTH,
SEND ME YOUR
ROCKETS!

SAM.
THERE IT IS.
LOOK.

EARTH CHANGED
IN THE BLACK SKY.
IT CAUGHT FIRE.

THAT
CAN'T BE
EARTH, THAT'S NOT
EARTH! NO, THAT
AIN'T EARTH! IT
CAN'T BE...

YOU MEAN IT
COULDN'T BE EARTH.
THAT JUST ISN'T EARTH.
NO, THAT'S NOT EARTH;
IS THAT WHAT
YOU MEAN?

SWITCH ON MORE
LIGHTS. TURN UP THE MUSIC, OPEN
THE DOORS. THERE'LL BE ANOTHER
BATCH OF CUSTOMERS ALONG IN
A MILLION YEARS! GOTTA
BE READY, YES, SIR!

LET YOU IN
ON A LITTLE SECRET, SAM.
THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'S
GOING TO BE AN
OFF SEASON.



KALEIDOSCOPE



THIS WAS TRUE. HOLLIS KNEW THIS WAS TRUE. HE KNEW IT WITH A VAGUE ACCEPTANCE. THEY WERE PARTING TO GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS, AND NOTHING COULD BRING THEM BACK.

THEY WERE WEARING THEIR SEALED-TIGHT SPACE SUITS WITH THE PLASTIC TUBES OVER THEIR PALE FACES, BUT THEY HADN'T HAD TIME TO LOCK ON THEIR FORCE UNITS.

WITH THOSE EACH COULD BE A SMALL LIFEBOAT IN SPACE, SAVING HIMSELF, SAVING OTHERS, COLLECTING TOGETHER, FINDING EACH OTHER UNTIL THEY WERE AN ISLAND OF MEN WITH SOME PLAN.

BUT WITHOUT THE FORCE UNITS SNAPPED TO THEIR SHOULDERS THEY WERE METEORS, SENSELESS, EACH GOING TO A SEPARATE AND IRREVOCABLE FATE.

STONE TO HOLLIS.
HOW LONG CAN WE
TALK BY PHONE?

IT DEPENDS ON
HOW FAST YOU'RE GOING
YOUR WAY AND I'M
GOING MINE.

AN HOUR, I
MAKE IT.

THAT SHOULD
DO IT.

WHAT
HAPPENED?

THE SHIP BLEW
UP. THAT'S ALL.
SPACECRAFT DO
BLOW UP.

WHICH
WAY ARE YOU
GOING?

IT LOOKS LIKE
I'LL HIT THE
MOON.

IT'S EARTH FOR ME.
BACK TO OLD MOTHER
EARTH AT TEN THOUSAND
MILES PER HOUR. I'LL BURN
LIKE A MATCH.



THE OTHERS WERE SILENT, THINKING OF THE DESTINY THAT HAD BROUGHT THEM TO THIS, FALLING, AND NOTHING THEY COULD DO TO CHANGE IT. EVEN THE CAPTAIN WAS QUIET, FOR THERE WAS NO COMMAND OR PLAN HE KNEW THAT COULD PUT THINGS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.



WHO'S THAT?

STIMSON, I THINK. STIMSON, IS THAT YOU?

STIMSON, THIS IS HOLLIS. STIMSON, YOU HEAR ME?

STIMSON?

STIMSON, TAKE IT EASY; WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME FIX.

THERE'S A CHANCE WE'LL BE FOUND.

SHUT UP!

APPLEGATE! I WISH I COULD DO SOMETHING TO YOU!

OH, IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN, A LONG, LONG, LONG WAY DOWN, I DON'T WANT TO DIE. I DON'T WANT TO DIE... IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN.

IT'S A LONG, LONG WAY AND I DON'T LIKE IT. OH, GOD, I DON'T LIKE IT.

YES.

I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE. I WANT TO BE SOMEWHERE ELSE.

I MUST BE, I MUST BE. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS; I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS IS HAPPENING.

IT'S A BAD DREAM.

COME AND MAKE ME, HA, HA, HA, HA, COME AND SHUT ME UP.

I DON'T KNOW.

AAAAAEEEE

EEYUUA AAA EEEEE

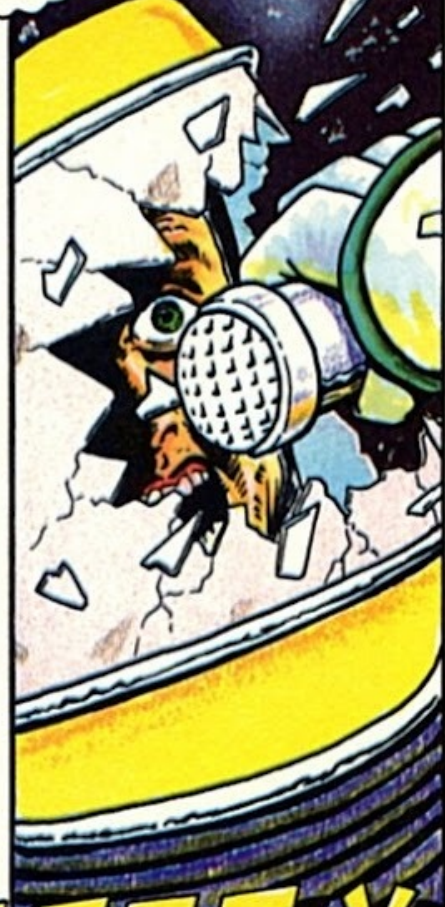
STOP
IT!



EEYUUA AAA EEEEE AAA

WE CAN'T TALK, IF
HE KEEPS SCREAMING!

THE MOON OR EARTH
OR METEORS WILL KILL HIM,
SO WHY NOT NOW?



AAAA YEEEEEEEEEE *



HOLLIS,
YOU STILL
THERE?

THIS IS
APPEGATE
AGAIN.

ALL RIGHT,
APPEGATE.



THAT'S ENOUGH
OF THAT. WE'VE GOT
TO FIGURE A WAY
OUT OF THIS.

WHAT??

LET'S TALK. WE
HAVEN'T ANYTHING
ELSE TO DO.

CAPTAIN,
WHY DON'T YOU
SHUT UP??

YOU HEARD ME,
CAPTAIN. DON'T PULL YOUR
RANK ON ME, YOU'RE TEN
THOUSAND MILES AWAY BY
NOW, AND LET'S NOT KID
OURSELVES. AS STIMSON
PUTS IT, IT'S A LONG
WAY DOWN.

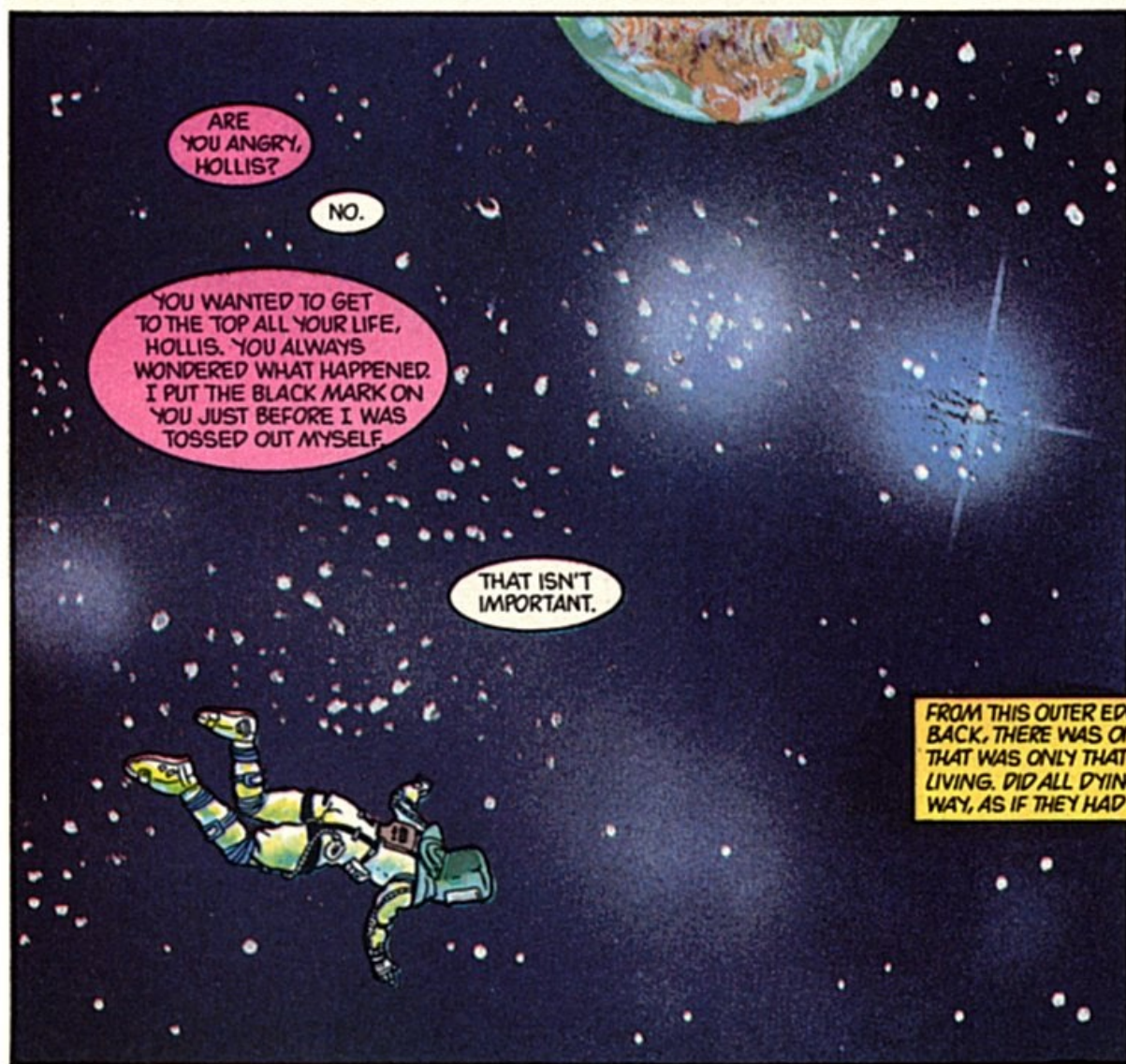
WHERE WERE WE,
HOLLIS? OH, YES, I
REMEMBER, I HATE
YOU, TOO. BUT YOU KNOW
THAT. YOU'VE KNOWN
IT FOR A LONG TIME.



I WANT
TO TELL YOU
SOMETHING,
MAKE YOU
HAPPY.



I WAS THE ONE
WHO BLACKBALLED
YOU WITH THE
ROCKET COMPANY
FIVE YEARS AGO.



ARE
YOU ANGRY,
HOLLIS?

NO.

YOU WANTED TO GET
TO THE TOP ALL YOUR LIFE,
HOLLIS. YOU ALWAYS
WONDERED WHAT HAPPENED.
I PUT THE BLACK MARK ON
YOU JUST BEFORE I WAS
TOSSED OUT MYSELF.

THAT ISN'T
IMPORTANT.

FROM THIS OUTER EDGE OF HIS LIFE, LOOKING
BACK, THERE WAS ONLY ONE REMORSE, AND
THAT WAS ONLY THAT HE WISHED TO GO ON
LIVING. DID ALL DYING PEOPLE FEEL THIS
WAY, AS IF THEY HAD NEVER LIVED?

WELL, I HAD ME A GOOD TIME. I HAD A WIFE ON MARS, VENUS, AND JUPITER. EACH OF THEM HAD MONEY AND TREATED ME SWELL. I GOT DRUNK AND ONCE I GAMBLED AWAY TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

BUT YOU'RE HERE NOW. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY OF THOSE THINGS. WHEN I WAS LIVING I WAS JEALOUS OF YOU, LESPERE; WHEN I HAD ANOTHER DAY AHEAD OF ME I ENVIED YOU YOUR WOMEN AND YOUR GOOD TIMES.

IT'S ALL OVER, LESPERE!

IT'S JUST AS IF IT NEVER WAS, LESPERE!



THIS IS HOLLIS.

WHEN ANYTHING'S OVER, IT'S JUST LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED. WHERE'S YOUR LIFE ANY BETTER THAN MINE, NOW? NOW IS WHAT COUNTS. IS IT ANY BETTER? IS IT?

HOW?!

WHO'S THAT?

YES, IT'S BETTER!

BECAUSE I GOT MY THOUGHTS, I REMEMBER!



HE'S RIGHT! THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEMORIES AND DREAMS. I ONLY HAVE DREAMS OF THINGS I WANTED TO DO, WHILE LESPERE HAD MEMORIES OF THINGS DONE AND ACCOMPLISHED.

WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO TO YOU? NOW? WHEN A THING'S OVER, IT'S NOT GOOD ANYMORE. YOU'RE NO BETTER OFF THAN I.

I'M RESTING EASY. I'VE HAD MY TURN. I'M NOT GETTING MEAN AT THE END, LIKE YOU.

MEAN?



Take it easy, Hollis.


IT WAS, OF COURSE, RIDICULOUS.

ONLY A MINUTE BEFORE HE HAD BEEN GIVING ADVICE TO OTHERS, TO STIMSON; HE HAD FELT A BRAVENESS WHICH HE HAD THOUGHT TO BE THE GENUINE THING, AND NOW HE KNEW THAT IT HAD BEEN NOTHING BUT SHOCK AND THE OBJECTIVITY POSSIBLE IN SHOCK.

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, HOLLIS, I DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY.

NOW HE WAS TRYING TO PACK A LIFE TIME OF SUPPRESSED EMOTION INTO AN INTERVAL OF MINUTES.

BUT AREN'T WE EQUAL? LESPERE AND I? HERE, NOW? IF A THING'S OVER, IT'S DONE, AND WHAT GOOD IS IT? YOU DIE ANYWAY.

An astronaut in a white and yellow spacesuit with a green helmet is floating in space. A red splash is visible near his feet.

HOLLIS?

THIS IS
APPLEGATE
AGAIN.

YES.

GUESS I'M GETTING OLD
FAST AND REPENTING FAST. I
GUESS LISTENING TO YOU BE MEAN
MADE ME ASHAMED. WHATEVER
THE REASON, I WANT YOU TO KNOW
I WAS AN IDIOT TOO. THERE'S NOT
AN OUNCE OF TRUTH IN WHAT
I SAID. TO HELL WITH YOU.

THANKS,
APPLEGATE.


DON'T MENTION
IT. UP YOUR NOSE, YOU
BASTARD.

An astronaut in a white and yellow spacesuit with a red helmet is floating in space, looking towards the left.


HEY!

WHAT?

I'VE GOT
MYSELF INTO A
METEOR SWARM,
SOME LITTLE
ASTEROIDS.

An astronaut in a white and yellow spacesuit with a green helmet is floating in space, surrounded by a large, swirling red meteor swarm.

METEORS?



I THINK IT'S THE MYRMIDONE CLUSTER THAT GOES OUT PAST MARS AND IN TOWARD EARTH ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS. I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE. IT'S LIKE A BIG KALEIDOSCOPE. YOU GET ALL KINDS OF COLORS AND SHAPES AND SIZES. GOD, IT'S BEAUTIFUL, ALL THAT METAL.

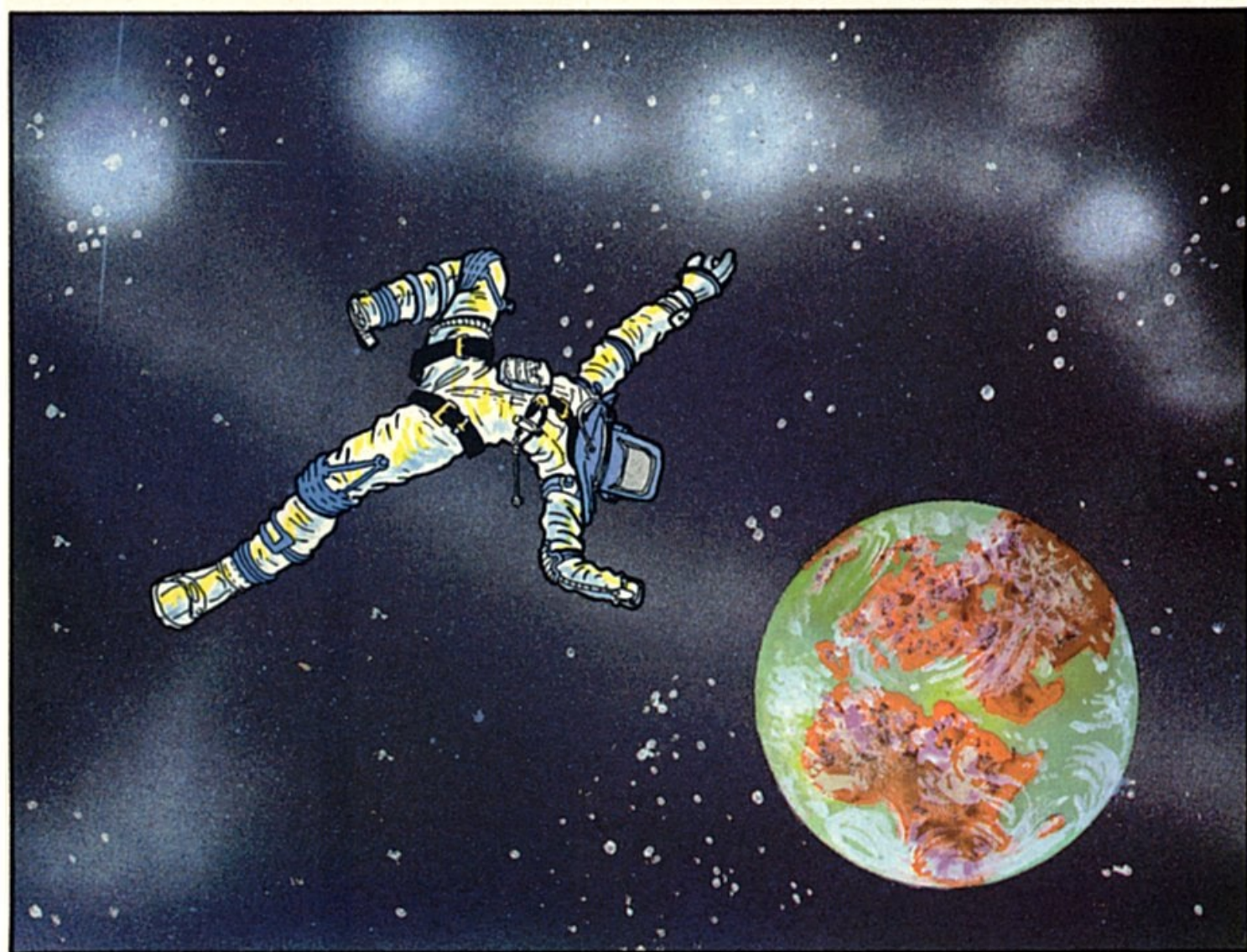
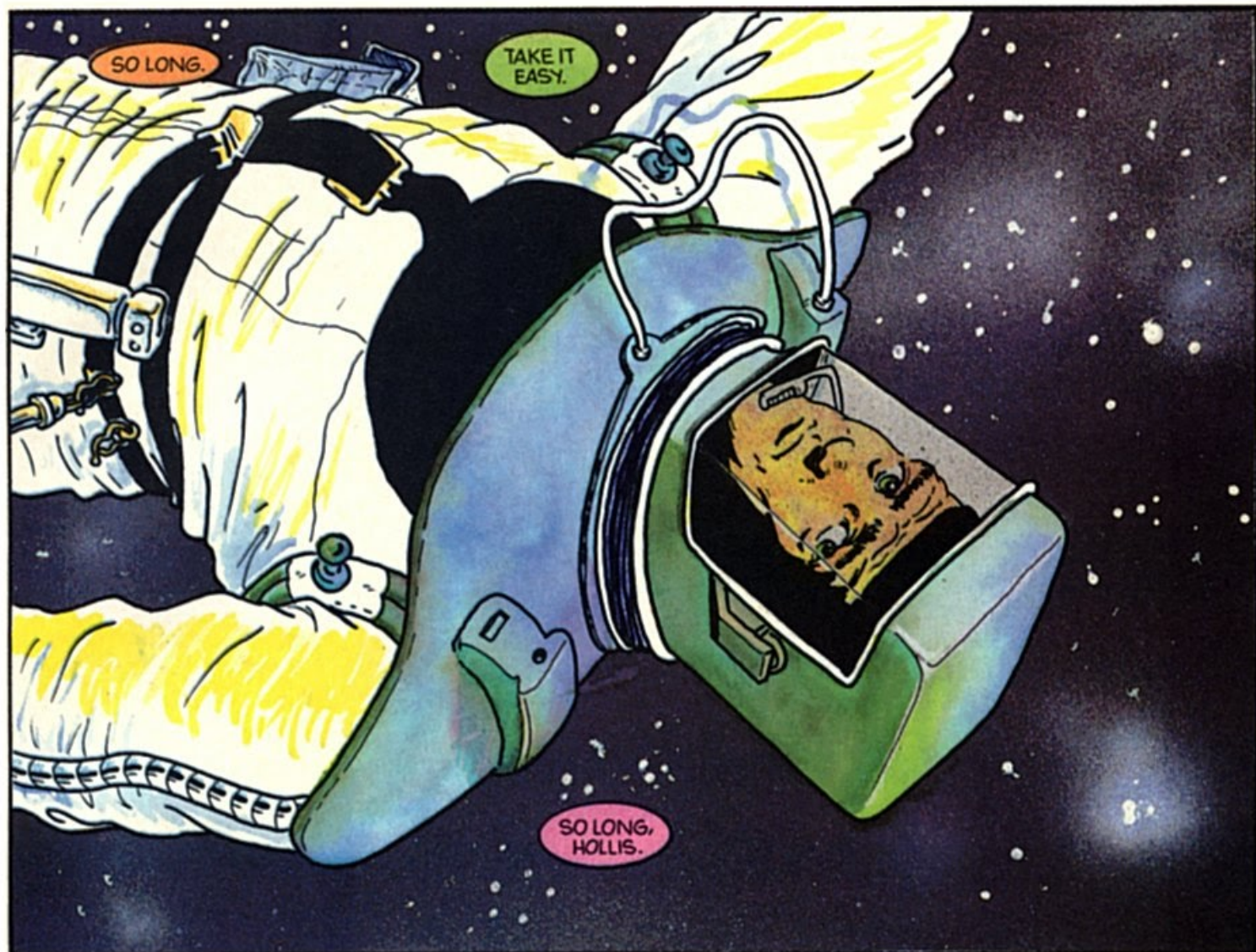
I'M GOING WITH THEM. THEY'RE TAKING ME OFF WITH THEM. I'LL BE DAMNED. HA, HA, HA, HA.

SO LONG, HOLLIS. SO LONG.

DON'T BE FUNNY.

GOOD LUCK.





THEY WERE ALL ALONE. THEIR VOICES HAD
DIED LIKE ECHOES OF THE WORDS OF GOD
SPOKEN AND VIBRATING IN THE
STARRED DEEP.

THERE WENT THE CAPTAIN TO THE MOON;
THERE STONE WITH THE METEOR SWARM;
THERE STIMSON; THERE APPELLEGATE
TOWARD PLUTO; THERE SMITH AND
TURNER AND UNDERWOOD AND
ALL THE REST.

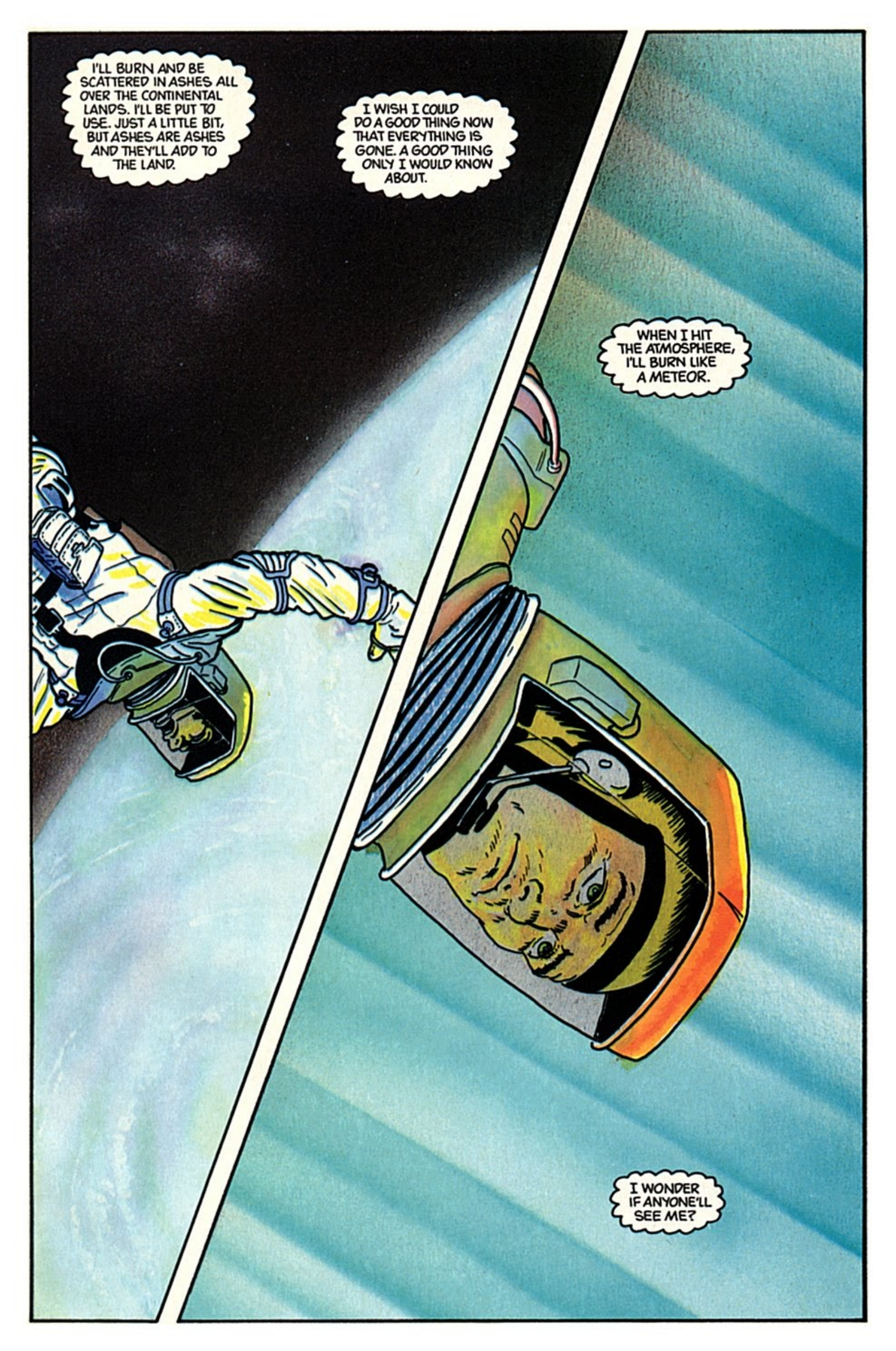
THE SHARDS OF THE KALEIDOSCOPE
THAT HAD FORMED A THINKING
PATTERN FOR SO LONG,
HURLED APART.

AND I? WHAT CAN
I DO? IS THERE ANYTHING I
CAN DO NOW TO MAKE UP
FOR A TERRIBLE AND
EMPTY LIFE?

IF ONLY I COULD DO
ONE GOOD THING TO MAKE
UP FOR THE MEANNESS I
COLLECTED ALL THESE
YEARS AND DIDN'T EVEN
KNOW WAS IN ME!



BUT THERE'S NO ONE HERE
BUT MYSELF AND HOW CAN YOU
DO GOOD ALL ALONE? YOU
CAN'T. TOMORROW NIGHT I'LL
HIT EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE.

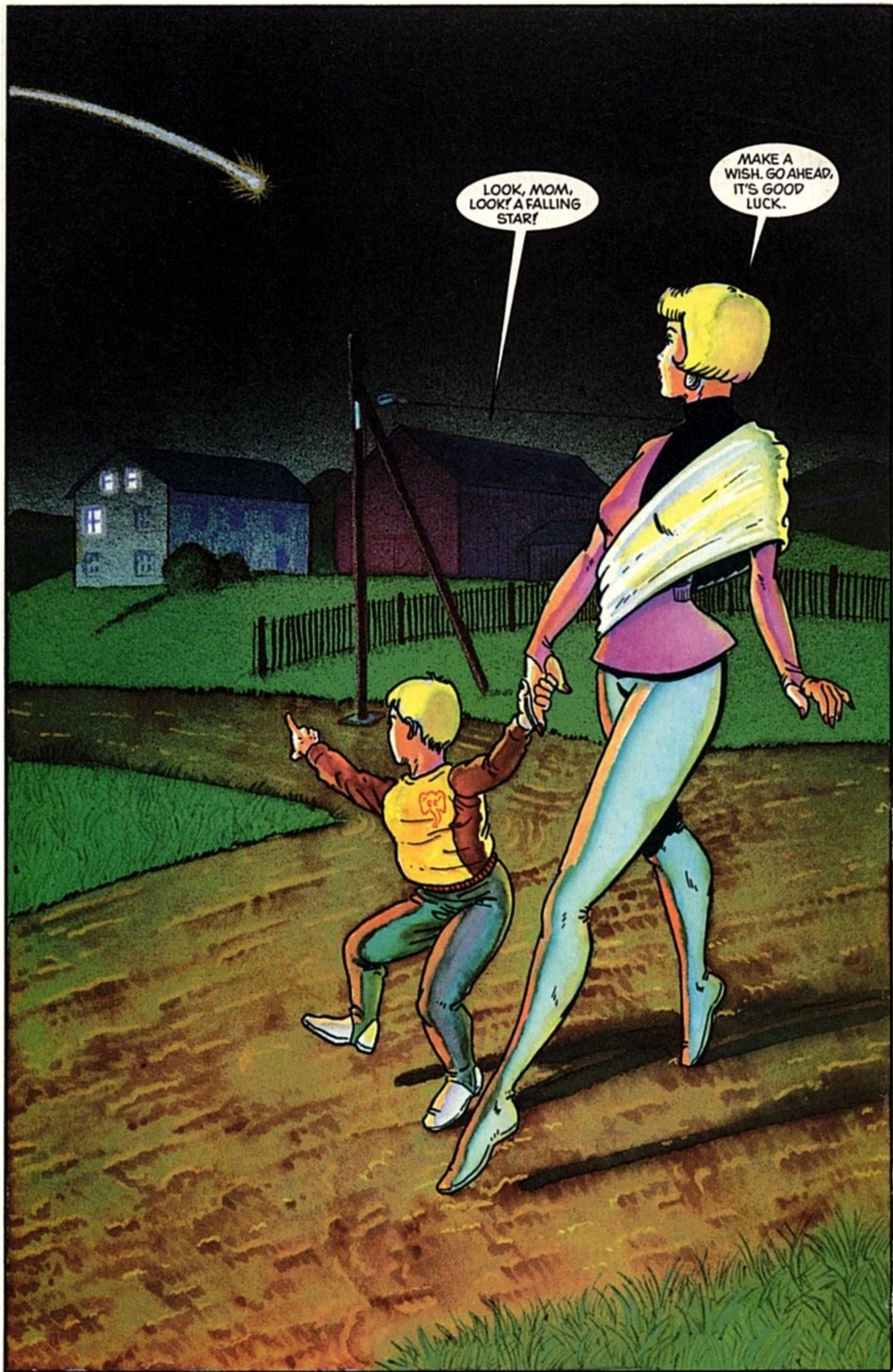


I'LL BURN AND BE
SCATTERED IN ASHES ALL
OVER THE CONTINENTAL
LANDS. I'LL BE PUT TO
USE. JUST A LITTLE BIT,
BUT ASHES ARE ASHES
AND THEY'LL ADD TO
THE LAND.

I WISH I COULD
DO A GOOD THING NOW
THAT EVERYTHING IS
GONE. A GOOD THING
ONLY I WOULD KNOW
ABOUT.

WHEN I HIT
THE ATMOSPHERE,
I'LL BURN LIKE
A METEOR.

I WONDER
IF ANYONE'LL
SEE ME?

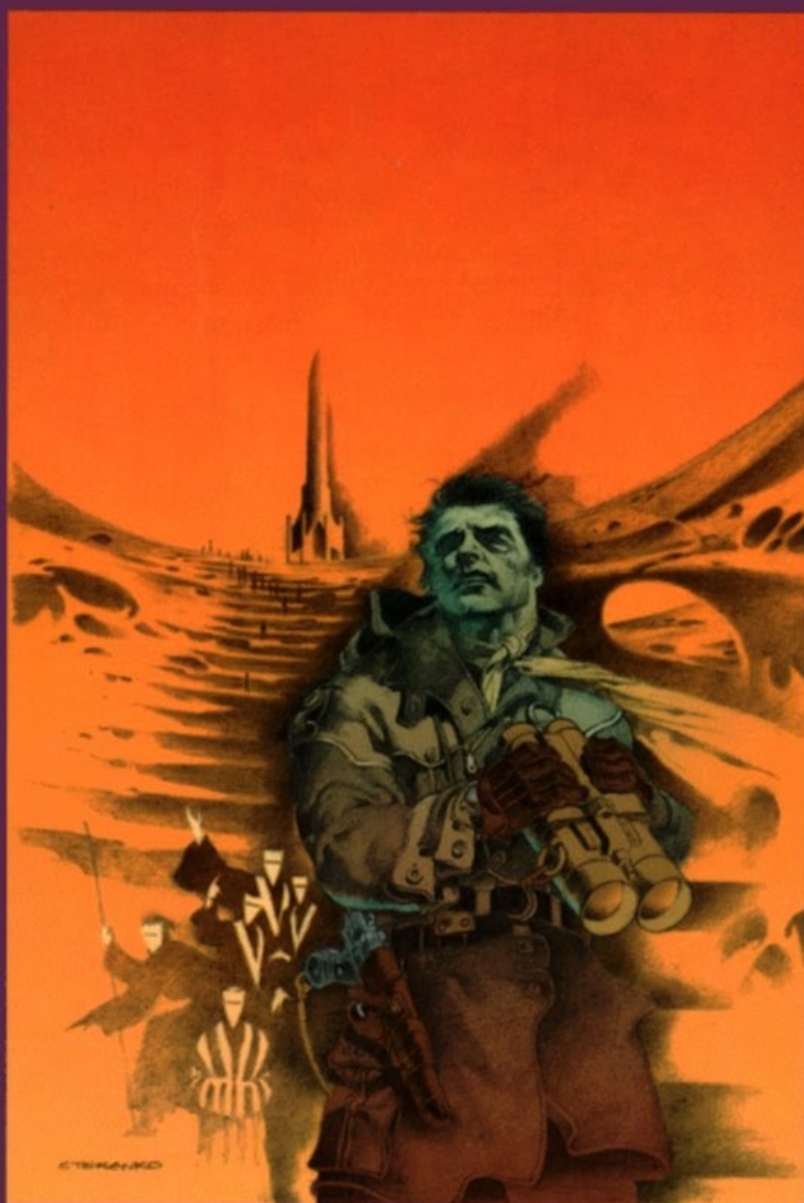


LOOK, MOM,
LOOK! A FALLING
STAR!

MAKE A
WISH. GO AHEAD,
IT'S GOOD
LUCK.

RAY BRADBURY

CHRONICLES



SKELETON

BY JOHN CARNELL,
ANTHONY WILLIAMS &
STEVE BASKERVILLE

UNCLE EINAR

BY LARS HOKANSON

HOME TO STAY

BY WALLY WOOD

OFF SEASON

BY DEL BARRAS

KALEIDOSCOPE

BY HOWARD SIMPSON

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